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The *Philokalia* is a collection of texts written between the fourth and the fifteenth centuries by spiritual masters of the Orthodox Christian tradition. It was compiled in the eighteenth century by two Greek monks, St Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain of Athos (1749-1809) and St Makarios of Corinth (1731-1805), and was first published at Venice in 1782. A second edition was published at Athens in 1893, and this included certain additional texts on prayer by Patriarch Kallistos not found in the 1782 edition. A third edition, in five volumes, was also published at Athens during the years 1957-1963 by the Astir Publishing Company. It is on the Astir edition that our English translation is based. Thus our translation, which we likewise hope to publish in five volumes, will reproduce all the texts included in the three Greek editions.

We depart notably from these editions in but four respects. First, we have not included the introduction written by St Nikodimos, and we have rewritten the notes which he placed before each text or series of texts written by a single author.

Second, we have used a more reliable version of a text if one is now available. Where that has been the case, we signify it in the relevant introductory note.

Third, we have attributed to Evagrios the work *On Prayer,* which in the Greek editions is attributed to St Neilos; the explanation for this change of attribution is in the note preceding Evagrios' texts.

Fourth, we have placed in an appendix the text, attributed to St Antony the Great, which opens the Greek editions; the reasons for this decision are likewise stated in the note introducing that text. Where certain passages, or indeed entire sections, of individual texts attributed by St Nikodimos to particular authors are now known or suspected to have been written by other hands, we have

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indicated this either in the introductory notes to the texts in question or in footnotes. But in no case have we excised

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[V1] 8, [V1] 9, [V1] 10

[V1] 11

Introduction to the Philokalia
Volume 1

The *Philokalia* is a collection of texts written between the fourth and the fifteenth centuries by spiritual masters of the Orthodox Christian tradition. It was compiled in the eighteenth century by two Greek monks, St Nikodimos of the Holy Mountain of Athos (1749-1809) and St Makarios of Corinth (1731-1805), and was first published at Venice in 1782. A second edition was published at Athens in 1893, and this included certain additional texts on prayer by Patriarch Kallistos not found in the 1782 edition. A third edition, in five volumes, was also published at Athens during the years 1957-1963 by the Astir Publishing Company. It is on the Astir edition that our English translation is based. Thus our translation, which we likewise hope to publish in five volumes, will reproduce all the texts included in the three Greek editions.

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Introduction to the Philokalia
Volume 1

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Philokalia - The Complete Text

1. Philokalia - The Complete Text

Philokalia - The Complete Text

St. Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain and St. Makarios of Corinth

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any such passage or section on the grounds that it is not by the author to whom St Nikodimos has attributed it. Thedistinction between genuine and spurious where all these writings are concerned must rest, not on the correctness ofthe attribution of their authorship, but on whether or not they belong to the spiritual tradition which the collection asa whole represents.

All the texts in the original Philokalia are in Greek, and all except two were first written in Greek, and even thesetwo (written originally in Latin) were translated into Greek in Byzantine times. But the influence of the work has byno means been confined to the Greek-speaking world. It was Paisii Velichkovskii (1722-1794), a Russian monkwho visited Mount Athos and later settled in Moldavia, who first translated a selection of the texts into Slavonic,published, with the title Dobrotolitblye, at Moscow in 1793 and reprinted at Moscow in 1822. This was thetranslation carried by the pilgrim in The Way of a Pilgrims and indeed the impact of the Philokalia on Russianspirituality and culture in the nineteenth century was immense, as the writings of Dostoievsky, an assiduous readerof the book, alone sufficiently testify. A translation into Russian was made by Ignatii Brianchaninov (1807-1867)and was published in 18'^7. Yet another Russian translation, still with the title Dobrotolubiye, was made by BishopTheophan the Recluse (1815-1894), who included in it several texts not in the original Greek edition, anddeliberately omitted or paraphrased certain passages in some of the texts of the Greek edition. Bishop Theophan'stranslation was published at Moscow in five volumes at the expense of the Russian Monastery of St Panteleimon onMount Athos. The first volume of the series, originally issued in 1877, was reprinted in 1883, 1885, 1905 and 1913.A photographic reprint of the 1883 edition was begun by the Monastery of the Holy Trinity, Jordanville, N.Y., in1963. A Romanian translation, which also includes additional material, began to appear in 1946 under the editorshipof Father Dumitru Staniloae; in 1976 the fifth volume of this edition appeared, and it is planned to complete it ineight volumes. A full French translation is in progress. Both the Romanian and the Flmch translations are based onthe original Greek.The only previous translation into English of texts from the

Philokalia is that made by E. Kadloubovsky and G. E. H. Palmer in two volumes

with the titles Writings from thePhilokalia on Prayer of the Heart and Early Fathers from the Philokalia^ published in 1951 and 1954 respectively.This translation was made, not from the Greek original, but from Theophan's Russian translation, and covers slightlyless than a third of the material of the Greek edition. It was because of this that the translators wrote in theirIntroduction to the second of these two English volumes that 'the only final solution to the problem of making thetreasures contained in the Philokalia available to the West in a form as rich and as wisely balanced as the original isfor someone with the necessary qualities ... to undertake to translate the whole of the original Greek itself. We canonly hope that this work will one day be achieved: it might well be one of the greatest single contributions toperpetuating in the West what is highest in the Christian tradition.' The present translation is a direct consequence ofthe hope expressed in that Introduction, written over twenty years ago.

What first determined the choice of texts made by St Nikodmios and St Makarios, and gives them their cohesion?'Philokalia'' itself means love of the beautiful, the exalted, the excellent, understood as the transcendent source of lifeand the revelation of Truth. It is through such love that, as the subtitle of the original edition puts it, 'the intellect ispurified, illumined and made perfect'. The texts were collected with a view to this purification, illumination andperfection. They show the way to awaken and develop attention and consciousness, to attain that state of

watchfulness which is the hallmark of sanctity. They describe the conditions most effective for learning what theirauthors call the art of arts and the science of sciences, a learning which is not a matter of information or agility ofmind but of a radical change of will and heart leading man towards the highest possibilities open to him, shaping andnourishing the unseen part of his being, and helping him to spiritual fulfillment and union with God. The Philokaliais an itinerary through the labyrinth of time, a silent way of love and gnosis through the deserts and emptinesses oflife, especially of modem life, a vivifying and fadeless presence. It is an active force revealing a spiritual path andinducing man to follow it. It is a summons to him to overcome his ignorance, to uncover the knowledge that lieswithin, to rid himself of illusion,

' Faber and Faber. London.

and to be receptive to the grace of the Holy Spirit who teaches all things and brings all things to remembrance.The texts of the Philokalia are, then, guides to the practice of the contemplative life. They constitute, as StNikodnnos puts it in his introduction, 'a mystical school of inward prayer' where those who study may cultivate thedivine seed implanted in their hearts at baptism and so grow in spirit that they become "sons of God' (John 1:12),attaining through such deification 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13). The emphasis istherefore on inner work, on the cleansing of 'the inside of the cup and plate, so that their outside may also be clean'(Matt. 23:26). This does not mean that what one might call outer work - the keeping of the commandments and thepractice of the moral virtues - is of no importance. On the contrary, such work is a pre-condition of that purificationwithout which no real progress in inner work can be made. Indeed, in this respect outer and inner complement oneanother. Atrophy or defeat follow only when outer work is practiced as an end in itself, and the one thing needful -the inner practice of guarding the intellect and of pure prayer - is neglected. St Nikodimos himself remarks that suchneglect is only too common: many there are who wear their whole life away in outer work, with the result that gracediminishes in them and they fail to realize the illumination of consciousness and purity of heart which are the goal ofthe spiritual path that the Philokaha charts for us.

An advanced state which may be acquired through the pursuit of this path is described as hesychia, a word which notonly bears the sense of tranquility and silence (hence our translation: stillness) but also is linked through its Greekroot with the idea of being seated, fixed, and so of being concentrated. It is therefore fitting that from this wordshould come the term hesychasm, frequently applied to the whole complex of theory and practice which constitutesthe path itself. But here a certain caution is needed. Some modem historians, prone to over-simplification andschematization, have tended to speak of hesychasm as though it were a phenomenon of the later Byzantine world.They speak of the hesychast movement, and by this they mean the spiritual revival which, centered on Mount Athosin the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, spread from there into neighboring lands such as Bulgaria, Serbia andRussia. Yet hesychasm itself is far more than a local historical movement dating

to the later Byzantine centuries. On the contrary it denotes the whole spiritual tradition going back to the earliest

times and delineated in the Philokalia. If evidence for this is needed, it may be found in the fact that one of thecentral forms of the art and science which constitute hesychasm - namely, the invocation of the name of Jesus, or theJesus Prayer, to give it its traditional title - is already integral to the spiritual method described in many of the textsincluded in this first volume, most if not all of which were written prior to the ninth century. Indeed, although thePhilokalia is concerned with many other matters, it would not be too much to say that it is the recurrent references tothe Jesus Prayer which more than anything else confer on it its inner unity.

It must be stressed, however, that this spiritual path known as hesychasm cannot be followed in a vacuum. Althoughmost of the texts in the Philokalia are not specifically doctrinal, they all presuppose doctrine even when they do notstate it. Moreover, this doctrine entails an ecclesiology. It entails a particular understanding of the Church and a viewof salvation inextricably bound up with its sacramental and liturgical life. This is to say that hesychasm is notsomething that has developed independently of or alongside the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church. It ispart and parcel of it. It too is an ecclesial tradition. To attempt to practice it, therefore, apart from active participationin this sacramental and liturgical life is to cut it off from its living roots. It is also to abuse the intention of itsexponents and teachers and so to act with a presumption that may well have consequences of a disastrous kind,mental and physical.

There is a further point connected with this. The texts in the Philokalia were written by and for those actively livingnot only within the sacramental and liturgical framework of the Orthodox Church, but also within that of theOrthodox monastic tradition. They therefore presuppose conditions of life radically different from those in whichmost readers of this English translation are likely to find themselves. Is this tantamount to saying that the counselsthey contam can be applied only within a monastic environment? Many hesychast writers affirm that this is not thecase, and St Nikodimos himself, in his introduction to the original Philokalia, goes out of his way to stress that'unceasing prayer' may or, rather, should be practiced by all. Naturally, the monastic life provides conditions, suchas quietness, solitude and regularity,

indispensable for that

concentration without which one cannot advance far along the spiritual path. But, provided that the basic conditionof active participation in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church is fulfilled, then this path is open to all tofollow, each to the best of his or her ability and whatever the circumstances under which he or she lives. Indeed, inthis respect the distinction between the monastic life and life 'in the world' is but relative: every human being, byvirtue of the fact that he or she is created in the image of God, is summoned to be perfect, is summoned to love Godwith all his or her heart, soul and mind. In this sense all have the same vocation and all must follow the samespiritual path. Some no doubt will follow it further than others: and again for some the intensity of the desire withwhich they pursue it may well lead them to embrace a pattern of life more in harmony with its demands, and thispattern may well be provided by the monastic life. But the path with its goal is one and the same whether followedwithin or outside a monastic environment. What is essential is that one does not follow it in an arbitrary andignorant manner. Personal guidance from a qualified teacher should always be sought for. If such guidance is not tobe found, then active participation in the sacramental and liturgical life of the Church, always necessary, will havean added importance in the overcoming of obstacles and dangers inherent in any quest of a spiritual nature. Certainkey words occur and recur in these hesychastic writings. We have listed the most important of them in a glossary,specifying the English words we have used in translating them and the sense we attribute to them; and we have also

indicated where they first occur in the translation itself.^ But their real significance will be grasped only as thereader penetrates ever more deeply into the meaning of the passages in which they are to be found - indeed, as hepenetrates ever more deeply into the theory and practice of the spiritual path they help to signpost.Something similar applies with respect to the whole psychological understanding which these texts both presupposeand elucidate. In effect, one is confronted with a psychology, or science of the soul, many of whose fundamentalfeatures - particularly perhaps in relation to the role of the demons - are completely unrecognized by,

' Words listed in the Glossary are marked in the text with-an asterisk*; see note on p. 20.

not to say at odds with, the theories of most modem psychologists. The contemporary reader, influenced directly orindirectly by these latter-day theories, may well be tempted to reject hesychastic psychology outright. Butalternatively he may be led first to question his own outlook and assumptions and then to modify or even abandonthem in the light of the understanding with which he is now confronted. In any case, how he reacts will depend verylargely on the degree to which he perceives the inner coherence and relevance of this understanding, not only on thetheoretical level but also in terms of his own experience. In this connection it should be remembered that, howevermuch the external appearances and conditions of the world may change, such changes can never uproot thefundamental potentialities of the human state and of man's relationship with God: and as it is with these latter thatthe teaching and method of the Philokalia are concerned, the counsels it enshrines are as valid and effective today asthey were at the times at which they were written.

This English translation of the Philokalia is produced under the auspices and with the financial assistance of acharitable trust, the Elmg Trust. The work of initial translation has been done by a group of scholars andcollaborators, namely the Holy Transfiguration Monastery at Brookline, Massachusetts, Dr Constantine Cavamos ofBoston, Father Basil Osbome of Oxford, and Father Norman Russell of the London Oratory. But the final version ofthe text has been prepared by and is the responsibility of the Editorial Committee set up by the Trustees of the ElingTrust, and consisting of G. E. H. Palmer, Dr Philip Sherrard and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware. The task of checkingagainst the Greek text for consistency in interpretation in the English translation has been undertaken by the two lastnamed members of this Committee, while all three have cooperated in establishing the definitive version of thetranslation itself. Although we have tried not to impose a uniformity of style, it is none the less inevitable that ourtranslation should display less variety than the original texts. These texts were written by authors who lived atvarious times in a period that stretches over a thousand years and more, and who in addition came from manydiffering cultural backgrounds. Our translation extends over something like ten years, and

all those who contributedto it share by and large in but a single culture. In spite of this we hope we have not suppressed

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entirely the distinctive flavor of the original texts. And we hope, too, that those who prepared the initial translationswill forgive us for the many changes made to their texts for the reasons we have stated. The fact that we have madethese changes in no way lessens our deep gratitude to them.

We would like to thank Father Palamas Koumantos of Simonopetra Monastery on Mount Athos for his assistance;the Monks of the Serbian Monastery of Chilandan on Mount Athos for their generous hospitality on two prolongedoccasions; Mrs. Ian Busby for her invaluable work; and Miss Marguerite Langford for her assistance.

Finally, the Eling Trust and the Editorial Committee would also like to express their gratitude to the IngramMerrill Foundation of New York for a substantial grant provided to support this translation.

G.E.H. Palmer

Philip Sherrard

Archimandrite Kallistos WareBussock MayneMarch 1977

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St Isaiah the SoHtary

(? d. 489/91)(Volume l,pp. 21-28)

Inroductory Note

There is some uncertainty about the identity of the author of the Twenty-Seven Texts that follow. According to StNikodimos, St Isaiah the Solitary lived around the year 370 and was a contemporary Makarios the Great of Egypt.Most historians today consider him to be later in date. He is now usually identified

with a monk who lived initiallyat Sketis in Egypt, and who then moved to Palestine at some date subsequent to 431, eventually dying in great oldage as a recluse near Gaza on 11 August 491 (according to others, 489). Whichever date is preferred, it is evidentthat the author reflects the authentic spirituality of the Desert Fathers of Egypt and Palestine during the fourth andfifth centuries. St Nikodimos commends in particular his advice on the rebuttal of demonic provocations and on theneed to be attentive to the conscience.St Nikodimos here gives no more than short extracts from a much longer work, as yet untranslated into English.^

' Greek text edited by the monk Avgoustinos (Jerusalem, 1911; reprinted, Volos, 1962); French translation by DomHerve de Uroc, AbbeIsaie.. Recueil ascetique, with an introduction by Dom L. Regnault (Collection Spiritualite Orientale, No. 7, 2nd edition, Abbaye deBellefontaine, 1976).

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St Isaiah the Solitary

On Guarding the IntellectTwenty-Seven Texts

There is among the passions an anger of the inteUect, and this anger is in accordance with nature. Without angera man cannot attain purity: he has to feel angry with all that is sown in him by the enemy. When Job felt thisanger he reviled his enemies, calling them "dishonorable men of no repute, lacking everything good, whom Iwould not consider fit to live with the dogs that guard my flocks' (cf Job 30:1, 4. LXX). He who wishes toacquire the anger that is in accordance with nature must uproot all self-will, until he establishes within himselfthe state natural to the intellect.

If you find yourself hating your fellow men and resist this hatred, and you see that it grows weak andwithdraws, do not rejoice in your heart; for this withdrawal is a trick of the evil spirits. They are preparing asecond attack worse than the first; they have left their troops behind the city and ordered them to remain there.If you go out to attack them, they will flee before you in weakness. But if your heart is then elated because youhave driven them away, and you

leave the city, some of them will attack you from the rear while the rest willstand their ground in front of you; and your wretched soul will be caught between them with no means ofescape. The city is prayer. Resistance is rebuttal through Christ Jesus. The foundation is mcensive power.

Let us stand firm in the fear of God, rigorously practicing the virtues and not giving our conscience cause tostumble. In the fear of God let us keep our attention fixed within ourselves, until our conscience achieves itsfreedom. Then there will be a union between it and us, and thereafter it will be our guardian, showing us eachthing that we must uproot. But if we do not obey our

conscience, it will abandon us and we shall fall into the hands of our enemies, who will never let us go. This is whatour Lord taught us when He said: 'Come to an agreement with your adversary quickly while you are with him in theroad, lest he hand you over to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer and you are cast into prison (Matt.5:25). The conscience is called an 'adversary' because it opposes us when we wish to carry out the desires of ourflesh; and if we do not listen to our conscience, it delivers us into the hands of our enemies.

4. If God sees that the intellect has entirely submitted to Him and puts its hope in Him alone. He strengthens it,saying: 'Have no fear Jacob my son, my little Israel" (Isa. 41:14. LXX), and: 'Have no fear: for I have deliveredyou, I have called you by My name; you are Mine. If you pass through water, I shall be with you, and the riverswill not drown you. If you go through fire, you will not be burnt, and the names will not consume you. For I amthe Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, who saves you' (cf. Isa. 43:1-3. LXX).

When the intellect hears these words of reassurance, it says boldly to its enemies: 'Who would fight with me?Let him stand against me. And who would accuse me? Let him draw near to me. Behold, the Lord is my helper;who will harm me? Behold, all of you are like an old moth-eaten garment' (cf Isa. 50:8-9. LXX).

If your heart comes to feel a natural hatred for sin, it has defeated the causes of sin and freed itself from them.Keep hell's torments in mind: but know that your Helper is at hand. Do nothing that will grieve Him, but say toHim with tears: 'Be merciful and deliver me, 0 Lord, for without Thy help I cannot escape from the hands ofmy enemies." Be attentive to your heart, and He will guard you from all evil.

The monk should shut all the gates of his soul, that is, the senses, so that he is not lured astray. When theintellect sees that it is not dominated by anything, it prepares itself for immortality, gathering its senses togetherand forming them into one body.

If your intellect is freed from all hope in things visible, this is a sign that sin has died in you.

If your intellect is freed, the breach between it and God is eliminated.

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St Isaiah the SoHtary

On Guarding the Intellect

Twenty-Seven Texts

10. If your intellect is freed from all its enemies and attains the Sabbath rest, it lives in another age, a new age inwhich it contemplates things new and undecaying. For 'wherever the dead body is, there will the eagles begathered together' (Matt. 24: 28).

11. The demons cunningly withdraw for a time in the hope that we will cease to guard our heart, thinking we havenow attained peace, then they suddenly attack our unhappy soul and seize it like a sparrow. Gaining possessionof it, they drag it 7down mercilessly into all kinds of sin, worse than those which we have already committedand for which we have asked forgiveness. Let us stand, therefore, with fear of God and keep guard over ourheart, practicing the virtues which check the wickedness of our enemies.

12. Our teacher Jesus Christ, out of pity for mankind and knowing the utter mercilessness of the demons, severelycommands us: 'Be ready at every hour, for

you do not know when the thief will come; do not let him come andfind you asleep' (cf Matt. 24:42-43). He also says: "Take heed, lest your hearts be overwhelmed withdebauchery and drunkenness and the cares of this life, and the hour come upon you unawares' (cf. Luke 21:34).Stand guard, then, over your heart and keep a watch on your senses; and if the remembrance of God dwellspeaceably within you, you will catch the thieves when they try to deprive you of it. When a man has an exactknowledge about the nature of thoughts,* he recognizes those which are about to enter and defile him, troublingthe intellect with distractions and making it lazy. Those who recognize these evil thoughts for what they areremain undisturbed and continue in prayer to God.

13. Unless a man hates all the activity of this world, he cannot worship God. What then is meant by the worship of

God? It means that we have nothing extraneous in our inteUect when we are praying to Him: neither sensualpleasure as we bless Him, nor malice as we sing His praise, nor hatred as we exalt Him, nor jealousy to hinderus as we speak to Him and call Him to mind. For all these things are full of darkness; they are a wallimprisoning our wretched soul, and if the soul has them in itself it cannot worship God with purity. Theyobstruct its ascent and prevent it from meeting God: they hinder it from blessing Him inwardly and praying toHim with sweetness of heart, and so receiving His illumination. As a result the intellect is always shrouded indarkness and cannot

advance in holiness, because it does not make the effort to uproot these thoughts by means of spiritual knowledge.

14. When the intellect rescues the soul's senses from the desires of the flesh and imbues them with dispassion,* thepassions shamelessly attack the soul, trying to hold its senses fast in sin; but if the intellect then continually callsupon God in secret. He, seeing all this, will send His help and destroy all the passions at once.

15. I entreat you not to leave your heart unguarded, so long as you are in the body. Just as a farmer cannot feelconfident about the crop growing in his fields, because he does not know what will happen to it before it isstored away in his granary, so a man should not leave his heart unguarded so long as he still has breath in hisnostrils. Up to his last breath he cannot know what passion will attack him; so long as he breathes, therefore, hemust not leave his heart unguarded, but should at every moment pray to God for His help and mercy.

16. He who receives no help when, at war should feel no confidence when at peace.

17. When a man severs himself from evil, he gains an exact understanding of all the sins he has committed againstGod; for he does not see his sins unless he severs himself from them with a feeling of revulsion. Those whohave reached this level pray to God with tears, and are filled with shame when they recall their evil love of thepassions. Let us therefore pursue the spiritual way with all our strength, and God in His great mercy will helpus. And if we have not guarded our hearts as our fathers guarded theirs, at least in obedience to God let us do allwe can to keep our bodies sinless, trusting that at this time of spiritual dearth He will grant mercy to us togetherwith His saints.

18. Once you have begun to seek God with true devotion and with all your heart, then you cannot possibly imaginethat you already conform to His will. So long as your conscience reproves you for anything that you have donecontrary to nature, you are not yet free: the reproof means that you are still under trial and have not yet beenacquitted. But if you find when you are praying that nothing at all accuses you of evil, then you are free and byGod's will have entered into His peace.

If you see growing within yourself a good crop, no longer choked by the tares of the evil one; if you find that thedemons have

reluctantly withdrawn, convinced that it is no use making further attacks on your senses; if 'a cloud overshadowsyour tent (cf Exod. 40:34), and 'the sun does not bum you by day, nor the moon by night' (Ps. 121:6); if you findyourself equipped to pitch your tent and keep it as God wishes - if all this has happened,

then you have gained thevictory with God's help, and henceforward He will Himself overshadow your tent, for it is His.

So long as the contest continues, a man is full of fear and trembling, wondering whether he will win today or bedefeated, whether he will win tomorrow or be defeated: the struggle and stress constrict his heart. But when he hasattained dispassion, the contest comes to an end; he receives the prize of victory and has no further anxiety about thethree that were divided, for now through God they have made peace with one another. These three are the soul, thebody and the spirit. When they become one through the energy of the Holy Spirit, they cannot again be separated.Do not think, then, that you have died to sin, so long as you suffer violence, whether waking or sleeping, at thehands of your opponents. For while a man is still competing in the arena, he cannot be sure of victory.

19. When the intellect grows strong, it makes ready to pursue the love which quenches all bodily passions and which

prevents anything contrary to nature from gaining control over the heart. Then the intellect, struggling againstwhat is contrary to nature, separates this from what is in accordance with nature.

20. Examine yourself daily in the sight of God, and discover which of the passions is in your heart. Cast it out, and

so escape His judgment.

21. Be attentive to your heart and watch your enemies, for they are cunning in their malice. In your heart bepersuaded of this: it is impossible for a man to achieve good through evil means. That is why our Savior told usto be watchful, saying: 'Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leads to life, and few there are that find it(Matt. 7:14).

22. Be attentive to yourself, so that nothing destructive can separate you from the love of God. Guard your heart,

and do not grow listless and say: 'How shall I guard it, since I am a sinner?' For when a man abandons his sinsand returns to God, his repentance regenerates him and renews him entirely.

23. Holy Scripture speaks everywhere about the guarding of the

heart, in both the Old and the New Testaments. David says in the Psalms: '0 sons of men, how long will you be

heavy of heart?' (Ps. 4:2. LXX), and again: 'Their heart is vain' (Ps. 5:9. LXX); and of those who think futilethoughts, he says: 'For he has said in his heart, I shall not be moved' (Ps. 10:6), and: 'He has said in his heart, Godhas forgotten'(Ps. 10:11).

A monk should consider the purpose of each text in Scripture, to whom it speaks and on what occasions. Heshould persevere continually in the ascetic struggle and be on his guard against the provocations of the enemy. Likea pilot steering a boat through the waves, he should hold to his course, guided by grace. Keeping his attention fixedwithin himself, he should commune with God in stillness, guarding his thoughts from distraction and his intellectfrom curiosity.

24. In storms and squalls we need a pilot, and in this present life we need prayer: for we are susceptible to theprovocations of our thoughts, both good and bad. If our thought is full of devotion and love of God, it rules overthe passions. As hesychasts, we should discriminate between virtue and vice with discretion and watchfulness:and we should know which virtues to practice when in the presence of our brethren and elders and which topursue when alone. We should know which virtue comes first, and which second or third; which passions attackthe soul and which the body, and also which virtues concern the soul and which the body. We should knowwhich virtue pride uses in order to assault the intellect, and which virtue leads to vainglory, wrath or gluttony.For we ought to purify our thoughts from 'all the self-esteem that exalts itself against the knowledge of God' (2Cor. 10:5).

25. The first virtue is detachment, that is, death in relation to every person or thing. This produces the desire forGod, and this in turn gives rise to the anger that is in accordance with nature, and that flares up against all thetricks of the enemy. Then the fear of God will establish itself within us, and through this fear love will be mademanifest.

26. At the time of prayer, we should expel from our heart the provocation of each evil thought, rebutting it in a spirit

of devotion so that we do not prove to be speaking to God with our lips, while pondering wicked thoughts in ourheart. God will not accept from

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the hesychast a prayer that is turbid and careless, for everywhere Scripture tells us to guard the soul's organs ofperception. If a monk submits his will to the law of God, then his intellect will govern in accordance with this lawall that is subordinate to itself. It will direct as it should all the soul's impulses, especially its mcensive power anddesire, for these are subordinate to it.

We have practiced virtue and done what is right, turning our desire towards God and His will, and directing ourincensive power, or wrath, against the devil and sin. What then do we still lack'? Inward meditation.

27. If some shameful thought is sown in your heart as you are sitting in your cell, watch out. Resist the evil, so that itdoes not gain control over you. Make every effort to call God to mind, for He is looking at you, and whateveryou are thinking in your heart is plainly visible to Him. Say to your soul: 'If you are afraid of sinners likeyourself seeing your sins, how much more should you be afraid of God who notes everything?' As a result ofthis warning the fear of God will be revealed in your soul, and if you cleave to Him you will not be shaken by

the passions: for it is written: 'They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion: he that dwells in Jerusalemshall never be shaken' (Ps. 125:1. LXX). Whatever you are doing, remember that God sees all your thoughts,and then you will never sin. To Him be glory through all the ages. Amen.

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Evagrios the Solitary

(345/6 - 399)(I'olwne 1, pp. 29-71)

Introductory Note

Evagrios the Solitary, also known as Evagrios Pontikos, was bom in 345 or 346, probably at Ibora in Pontus,although according to another opinion he was a

native of Iberia (Georgia). A disciple of the Cappadocian Fathers, hewas ordained reader by St Basil the Great and deacon by St Gregory the Theologian (Gregory of Nazianzos), and heaccompanied the latter to the Council of Constantinople in 381 (the second Ecumenical Council). Evagrios wasnever ordained priest. After a brief stay in Jerusalem, he went in 383 to Egypt, where he spent the remaining sixteenyears of his life. After two years at Nitria, where he became a monk, he moved to the more remote desert of Kellia,dying there in 399. While in Egypt he had as his spiritual father the priest of Kellia, St Makarios of Alexandria, andit is probable that he also knew St Makarios the Egyptian, the priest and spiritual father of Sketis. In the person ofthese two saints, he came into contact with the first generation of the Desert Fathers and with their spirituality in itspurest form.

In the numerous writings of Evagrios there may be discerned two tendencies, the one 'speculative' and the other'practical'. On the 'speculative' side he relies heavily upon Origen (c. 185-c. 254), borrowing from him in particularcertain theories about the pre-existence of human souls and the apokatastasis or final restoration of all things inChrist. These theories were condemned at the fifth Ecumenical Council (553). On the 'practical' side he draws uponthe living experience of the Desert Fathers of Egypt, mainly Copts, among whom he spent the last years of his life.He possessed to an exceptional degree the gifts of psychological insight and vivid description, together with theability to analyze and define with remarkable precision the various stages on the spiritual way. Here his teachings,so far from being condemned, have exercised a decisive influence upon subsequent writers. His disciple St John

Introductory Note

Cassian, while abandoning the suspect theories that Evagrios derived from Origen, transmitted the 'practical'aspect of Evagrios' teachings to the Latin West. In the Greek East the technical vocabulary devised by Evagrios

remained thereafter standard: it can be found, for example, in the writings of St Diadochos of Photiki, St JohnKhmakos and St Maximos the Confessor, as also within the Syriac tradition, in the Mystic Treatises of St Isaac ofNineveh. The

works included by St Nikodimos in the Philokalia all belong to the'practical' side of Evagrios, andcontain little if any trace of suspect speculations.

Several of Evagrios' works have come down under the name of other authors. This is the case with the writing OnPrayer, which in the Greek Philokalia is ascribed to Neilos; but recent research has made it plain beyond anyreasonable doubt that this is a writing of Evagrios.'

' See the studies by I. Haushen', 'Le Traite de I'Oraison d'Evagre le Politique'. mReviie d'Ascetiqiie et lie Mystique, XV (1934), pp. 34-93, 113-70; and Lei lefons d'lin contempj atif. Le Traite de I'Oraison d'Evagre Is f antique (Paris, 1960). The Eva-grian authorship of the work On Prayeris accepted by a previous Enghsh translator, John Eudes Bamberger, in his introduction to Evagrius Ponticus; The Praktikos; Chapters on Prayer(Cistercian Studies Series, No. 4, Spencer. Mass.. 1970 [i.e. 1972]).

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In Jeremiah it is said: 'And you shall not take a wife in this place, for thus says the Lord concerning the sons anddaughters bom in this place: . . . they shall die grievous deaths' (Jer. 16:1-4). This shows that, in the words of theApostle, 'He that is married cares for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife', and he isinwardly divided, and 'she that is married cares for the things of

the world, how she may please her husband' (1 Cor.7:32-34). It is clear that the statement in Jeremiah, 'they shall die grievous deaths', refers not only to the sons anddaughters bom as a result of marriage, but also to those bom in the heart, that is, to worldly thoughts and desires:these too will die from the weak and sickly spirit of this world, and will have no place in heavenly life. On the otherhand, as the Apostle says, 'he that is unmarried cares for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please theLord' (1 Cor. 7:32); and he produces the fruits of eternal life, which always keep their freshness.

Such is the solitary. He should therefore abstain from women and not beget a son or daughter in the place ofwhich Jeremiah speaks. He must be a soldier of Christ, detached from material things, free from cares and notinvolved in any trade or commerce, for, as the Apostle says, 'In order to please the leader who has chosen him, thesoldier going to war does not entangle himself in the affairs of this world' (2 Tim. 2:4). Let the monk follow thiscourse, especially since he has renounced the materiality of this world in order to win the blessings of stillness. Forthe practice of stillness is full of joy and beauty: its yoke is easy and its burden light.

Do you desire, then, to embrace this hfe of sohtude, and to seek out the blessings of stiUness? If so, abandon thecares of the world, and the principalities and powers that lie behind them: free yourself

from attachment to material things, from domination by passions and desires, so that as a stranger to all this you mayattain true stillness. For only by raising himself above these things can a man achieve the life of stillness.

Keep to a sparse and plain diet, not seeking a variety of tempting dishes. Should the thought come to you ofgetting extravagant foods in order to give hospitality, dismiss it, do not be deceived by it: for in it the enemy lies inambush, waiting to tear you away from stillness. Remember how the Lord rebukes Martha (the soul that is over-busy with such things) when He says: 'You are anxious and troubled about many things: one thing alone is needful'(Luke 10:41-42) - to hear the divine word: after that, one should be content with anything that comes to hand.

Heindicates all this by adding: 'Mary has chosen what is best, and it cannot be taken away from her' (Luke 10:42). Youalso have the example of how the widow of Zarephath gave hospitality to the Prophet (cf 1 Kings 17:9-16). If youhave only bread, salt or water, you can still meet the dues of hospitality. Even if you do not have these, but make thestranger welcome and say something helpful, you will not be failing in hospitality: for 'is not a word better than agift?' (Eccles. 18:17). This is the view you should take of hospitality. Be careful, then, and do not desire wealth forgiving to the poor. For this is another trick of the evil one, who often arouses self-esteem and fills your intellect withworry and restlessness. Think of the widow mentioned in the Gospel by our Lord: with two mites she surpassed thegenerous gifts of the wealthy. For He says: 'They cast into the treasury out of their abundance; but she . . . cast in allher livelihood' (Mark 12:44).

With regard to clothes, be content with what is sufficient for the needs of the body. 'Cast your burden upon theLord' (Ps. 55:22) and He will provide for you, since 'He cares for you' (IPet. 5:7). If you need food or clothes, do notbe ashamed to accept what others offer you. To be ashamed to accept is a kind of pride. But if you have more thanyou require, give to those in need. It is in this way that God wishes His children to manage their affairs. That is why,writing to the Corinthians, the Apostle said about those who were in want:

'Your abundance should supply their want, so that their abundance likewise may supply your want: then there willbe equality, as it is written: "He that gathered much had nothing over; and he that

gathered little had no lack"' (2 Cor. 8:14-15: Exod. 16:18). So if you have all you need for the moment, do not beanxious about the future, whether it is one day ahead or a week or months. For when tomorrow comes, it will supply

what you need, if you seek above all else the kingdom of heaven and the righteousness of God: for the Lord says:'Seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things as well will be given to you' (cf. Matt. 6:33).

Do not have a servant, for if you do you will no longer have only yourself to

provide for: and in that case theenemy may trip you up through the servant and disturb your mind with worries about laying in extravagant foods.Should you have the thought of getting a servant to allow your body a little ease, call to mind what is moreimportant -1 mean spiritual peace, for spiritual peace is certainly more important than bodily ease. Even if you havethe idea that taking a servant would be for the servant's benefit, do not accept it. For this is not our work: it is thework of others, of the holy Fathers who live in communities and not as solitaries. Think only of what is best foryourself, and safeguard the way of stillness.

Do not develop a habit of associating with people who are materially minded and involved in worldly affairs. Livealone, or else with brethren who are detached from material things and of one mind with yourself. For if oneassociates with materially minded people involved in worldly affairs, one will certainly be affected by their way oflife and will be subject to social pressures, to vain talk and every other kind of evil: anger, sorrow, passion formaterial things, fear of scandals. Do not get caught up in concern for your parents or affection for your relatives: onthe contrary, avoid meeting them frequently, in case they rob you of the stillness you have in your cell and involveyou in their own affairs. 'Let the dead bury their dead,' says the Lord: 'but come, follow me' (cf. Matt. 8:22).

If you find yourself growing strongly attached to your cell, leave it, do not cling to it, be ruthless. Do everythingpossible to attain stillness and freedom from distraction, and struggle to live according to God's will, battling againstinvisible enemies. If you cannot attain stillness where you now live, consider living in exile, and try and make upyour mind to go. Be like an astute business man: make stillness your criterion for testing the value of everything,and choose always what contributes to it.

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Indeed, I urge you to welcome exile. It frees you from all the entanglements of your own locality, and allows youto enjoy the blessings of stillness undistracted. Do not stay in a town, but persevere in the wilderness. "Lo,' says thePsalm, 'then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness' (Ps. 55:7). If possible, do

not visit a town at all.For you will find there nothing of benefit, nothing useful, nothing profitable for your way of life. To quote the Psalmagain, 'I have seen violence and strife in the city' (Ps. 55:9). So seek out places that are free from distraction, andsolitary. Do not be afraid of the noises you may hear. Even if you should see some demonic fantasy, do not beterrified or flee from the training ground so apt for your progress. Endure fearlessly, and you will see the greatthings of God, His help. His care, and all the other assurances of salvation. For as the Psalm says, 'I waited for Himwho delivers me from distress of spirit and the tempest' (Ps. 55:8. LXX).

Do not let restless desire overcome your resolution: for 'restlessness of desire perverts the guileless intellect'(Wisd. 4:12). Many temptations result from this. For fear that you may go wrong, stay rooted in your cell. If youhave friends, avoid constant meetings with them. For if you meet only on rare occasions, you will be of more help tothem. And if you find that harm comes through meeting them, do not see them at all. The friends that you do have

should be of benefit to you and contribute to your way of life. Avoid associating with crafty or aggressive people,and do not live with anyone of that kind but shun their evil purposes; for they do not dwell close to God or abidewith Him. Let your friends be men of peace, spiritual brethren, holy fathers. It is of such that the Lord speaks whenhe says: 'My mother and brethren and fathers are those who do the will of My Father who is in heaven' (cf Matt.12:49-50). Do not pass your time with people engaged in worldly affairs or share their table, in case they involveyou in their illusions and draw you away from the science of stillness. For this is what they want to do. Do not listento their words or accept the thoughts of their hearts, for they are indeed harmful. Let the labor and longing of yourheart be for the faithful of the earth, to become like them in mourning. For 'my eyes will be on the faithful of theland, that they may dwell with me' (Ps. 101:6). If someone who lives in accordance with the love of God comes toyou and invites you to eat, go if

you wish, but return quickly to your cell. If possible, never sleep outside your cell, so that the gift of stillness mayalways be with you. Then you will be

unhindered on your chosen path.

Do not hanker after fine foods and deceitful pleasures. For 'she that indulges in pleasure is dead while still alive',as the Apostle says (1 Tim. 5:6). Do not fill your belly with other people's food in case you develop a, longing for it,and this longing makes you want to eat at their table. For it is said: 'Do not be deceived by the filling of the belly'(Prov. 24:15. LXX). If you find yourself continually invited outside your cell, decline the invitations. For continualabsence from your cell is harmful. It deprives you of the grace of stillness, darkens your mind, withers your longingfor God. If a jar of wine is left in the same place for a long time, the wine in it becomes clear, settled and fragrant.But if it is moved about, the wine becomes turbid and dull, tainted throughout by the lees. So you, too, should stay inthe same place and you will find how greatly this benefits you. Do not have relationships with too many people, lestyour intellect becomes distracted and so disturbs the way of stillness.

Provide yourself with such work for your hands as can be done, if possible, both during the day and at night, sothat you are not a burden to anyone, and indeed can give to others, as Paul the Apostle advises (cf. 1 Thess. 2:9;Eph. 4:28). In this manner you will overcome the demon of listlessness and drive away all the desires suggested bythe enemy; for the demon of listlessness takes advantage of idleness. 'Every idle man is full of desires' (Prov. 13:4.LXX).

When buying or selling you can hardly avoid sin. So, in either case, be sure you lose a little in the transaction. Donot haggle about the price from love of gain, and so indulge in actions harmful to the soul - quarrelling, lying,shifting your ground and so on - thus bringing our way of life into disrepute. Understanding things in this manner,be on your guard when buying and selling. If possible it is best to place such business in the hands of someone youtrust, so that, being thus relieved of the worry, you can pursue your calling with joy and hope.

In addition to all that I have said so far, you should consider now other lessons which the way of stillness teaches,and do what I tell you. Sit in your cell, and concentrate your intellect; remember the day of death, visualize thedying of your body, reflect on this

calamity, experience the pain, reject the vanity of this world, its compromises and crazes, so that you may continuein the way of stillness and not weaken. Call to mind, also, what is even now going on in hell. Think of the suffering,the bitter silence, the terrible moaning, the great fear and agony, the dread of what is to come, the unceasing pain,the endless weeping. Remember, too, the day of your resurrection and how you will stand before God. Imagine thatfearful and awesome judgment-seat. Picture all that awaits those who sin: their shame before God the Father and HisAnointed, before angels, archangels, principalities and all mankind: think of all the forms of punishment: the eternalfire, the worm that does not die, the abyss of darkness, the gnashing of teeth, the terrors and the torments. Thenpicture all the blessings that await the righteous: intimate communion with God the Father and His Anointed, withangels, archangels, principalities and all the saints, the kingdom and its gifts, the gladness and the joy.

Picture both these states: lament and weep for the sentence passed on sinners, mourn while you are doing this,frightened that you, too, may be among them. But rejoice and be glad at the blessings that await the righteous, andaspire to enjoy them and to be delivered from the torments of hell. See to it that you never forget these things,whether inside your cell or outside it. This will help you to escape thoughts that are defiling and harmful.

Fast before the Lord according to your strength, for to do this will purge you of your iniquities and sins; it exaltsthe soul, sanctifies the mind, drives away the demons, and prepares you for God's presence. Having already eatenonce, try not to eat a second time the same day, in case you become extravagant and disturb your mind. In this wayyou will have the means for helping others and for mortifying the passions of your body. But if there is a meeting ofthe brethren, and you have to eat a second and a third time, do not be disgruntled and surly. On the contrary, dogladly what you have to do, and when you have eaten a second or a third time, thank God that you have fulfilled thelaw of love and that He himself is providing for you. Also, there are occasions when, because of a bodily sickness,you have to eat a second and a third time or more often. Do not be sad about this; when you are ill you shouldmodify your ascetic labors for the time being, so that you may regain the strength to take them up once more.

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As far as abstinence from food is concerned, the divine Logos did not prohibit the eating of anything, but said:'See, even as I have given you the green herb I have given you all things; eat, asking no questions; it is not what goesinto the mouth that defiles a man' (cf. Gen. 9:3; 1 Cor. 10:25; Matt. 15: 11). To abstain from food, then, should be amatter of our own choice and an ascetic labour.

Gladly bear vigils, sleeping on the ground and all other hardships, looking to the glory that will be revealed to youand to all the saints; 'for the sufferings of this present time', says the Apostle, 'are not worthy to be compared withthe glory which shall be revealed in us' (Rom. 8 : 18).

If you are disheartened, pray, as the Apostle says (cf. Jas. 5: 13). Pray with fear, trembling, effort, with inner

watchfulness and vigilance. To pray in this manner is especially necessary because the enemies are so malignant.For it is just when they see us at prayer that they come and stand beside us, ready to attack, suggesting to ourintellect the very things we should not think about when praying; in this way they try to take our intellect captiveand to make our prayer and supplication vain and useless. For prayer is truly vain and useless when not performedwith fear and trembling, with inner watchfulness and vigilance. When someone approaches an earthly king, heentreats him with fear, trembling and attention: so much the more, then, should we stand and pray in this mannerbefore God the Father, the Master of all, and before Christ the King of Kings. For it is He whom the whole spiritualhost and the choir of angels serve with fear and glorify with trembling; and they sing in unceasing praise to Him,together with the Father who has no origin, and with the all-holy and coetemal Spirit, now and ever through all theages. Amen.

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Evagrios the SolitaryTexts on Discrimination in Respect of Passions and Thoughts

1. Of the demons opposing us in the practice of the ascetic life, there are three groups who fight in the front line:

those entrusted with the appetites of gluttony, those who suggest avaricious

thoughts, and those who incite us toseek the esteem of men. All the other demons follow behind and in their turn attack those already wounded bythe first three groups. For one does not fall into the power of the demon of unchastity, unless one has first fallenbecause of gluttony: nor is one's anger aroused unless one is fighting for food or material possessions or theesteem of men. And one does not escape the demon of dejection, unless one no longer experiences sufferingwhen deprived of these things. Nor will one escape pride, the first offspring of the devil, unless one hasbanished avarice, the root of all evil, since poverty makes a man humble, according to Solomon (cf. Prov. 10:4.LXX). In short, no one can fall into the power of any demon, unless he has been wounded by those of the frontline. That is why the devil suggested these three thoughts to the Savior: first he exhorted Him to turn stones intobread; then he promised Him the whole world, if Christ would fall down and worship him: and thirdly he saidthat, if our Lord would listen to him. He would be glorified and suffer nothing in falling from the pinnacle ofthe temple. But our Lord, having shown Himself superior to these temptations, commanded the devil to 'getbehind Him'. In this way He teaches us that it is not possible to drive away the devil, unless we scornfully rejectthese three thoughts (cf Matt. 4:1-10).

2. All thoughts inspired by the demons produce within us conceptions of sensory objects; and in this way the

intellect, with such conceptions imprinted on it, bears the forms of these objects within itself. So, byrecognizing the object presented to it, the

intellect knows which demon is approaching. For example, if the face of a person who has done me harm or insultedme appears in my mind, I recognize the demon of rancor approaching. If there is a suggestion of material things orof esteem, again it will be clear which demon is troubling me. In the same way with other thoughts, we can inferfrom the object appearing in the mind which demon is close at hand, suggesting that object to us. I do not say that all

thoughts of such things come from the demons; for when the intellect is activated by man it is its nature to bringforth the images of past events. But all

thoughts producing anger or desire in a way that is contrary to nature arecaused by demons. For through demonic agitation the intellect mentally commits adultery and becomes incensed.Thus it cannot receive the vision of God, who sets us in order: for the divine splendor only appears to the intellectduring prayer, when the intellect is free from conceptions of sensory objects.

3. Man cannot drive away impassioned thoughts unless he watches over his desire and incensive power. He destroysdesire through fasting, vigils and sleeping on the ground, and he tames his incensive power through long-suffering, forbearance, forgiveness and acts of compassion. For with these two passions are connected almost allthe demonic thoughts which lead the intellect to disaster and perdition. It is impossible to overcome these passionsunless we can rise above attachment to food and possessions, to self-esteem and even to our very body, because itis through the body that the demons often attempt to attack us. It is essential, then, to imitate people who are indanger at sea and throw things overboard because of the violence of the winds and the threatening waves. But herewe must be very careful in case we cast things overboard just to be seen doing so by men. For then we shall getthe reward we want; but we shall suffer another shipwreck, worse than the first, blown off our course by thecontrary wind of the demon of self-esteem. That is why our Lord, instructing the intellect, our helmsman, says inthe Gospels: 'Take heed that you do not give alms in front of others, to be seen by them; for unless you take heed,you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.' Again, He says: 'When you pray, you must not be as thehypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in synagogues and at street-comers, so as to be seen by men. Truly Isay to you, they get the reward they want. . . . Moreover when you fast, do not put on a gloomy face, like thehypocrites:

for they disfigure their faces, so that they may be seen by men to be fasting. Truly I say to you, they get the rewardthey want' (cf. Matt. 6: 1-18). Observe how the Physician of souls here corrects our incensive power through acts ofcompassion, purifies the intellect through prayer, and through fasting withers desire. By means of these virtues thenew Adam is formed, made again according to the image of his Creator - an Adam in whom, thanks to dispassion,there is

'neither male nor female' and, thanks to singleness of faith, there is 'neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision noruncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all' (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3: 10:11).

4. We shall now enquire how, in the fantasies that occur during sleep, the demons imprint shapes and forms on our

intellect. Normally the intellect receives these shapes and forms either through the eyes when it is seeing, orthrough the ears when it is hearing, or through some other sense, or else through the memory, which stirs up andimprints on the intellect things which it has experienced through the body. Now it seems to me that in our sleep,when the activity of our bodily senses is suspended, it is by arousing the memory that the demons make thisimprint. But, in that case, how do the demons arouse the memory? Is it through the passions? Clearly this is so,for those in a state of purity and dispassion no longer experience demonic fantasies in sleep. There is also anactivity of the memory that is not demonic: it is caused by ourselves or by the angelic powers, and through it wemay meet with saints and delight in their company. We should notice in addition that during sleep the memory

stirs up, without the body's participation, those very images which the soul has received in association with thebody. This is clear from the fact that we often experience such images during sleep, when the body is at rest.

Just as it is possible to think of water both while thirsty and while not thirsty, so it is possible to think of goldwith greed and without greed. The same applies to other things. Thus if we can discriminate in this waybetween one kind of fantasy and another, we can then recognize the artfulness of the demons. We should beaware, too, that the demons also use external things to produce fantasies, such as the sound of waves heard atsea.5. When our incensive power is aroused in a way contrary to nature, it greatly furthers the aim of the demons and isan ally in all

their evil designs. Day and night, therefore, they are always trying to provoke it. And when they see it tethered bygentleness, they at once try to set it free on

some seemingly just pretext; in this way, when it is violently aroused,they can use it for their shameful purposes. So it must not be aroused either for just or for unjust reasons; and wemust not hand a dangerous sword to those too readily incensed to wrath, for it often happens that people become ex-cessively worked up for quite trivial reasons. Tell me, why do you rush into battle so quickly, if you are really abovecaring about food, possessions and glory? Why keep a watchdog if you have renounced everything? If you do, and itbarks and attacks other men, it is clear that there are still some possessions for it to guard. But since I know thatwrath is destructive of pure prayer, the fact that you cannot control it shows how far you are from such prayer. I amalso surprised that you have forgotten the saints: David who exclaims, 'Cease from anger, and put aside your wrath'(Ps. 37:8. LXX); and Ecclesiastes who urges us, 'Remove wrath from your heart, and put away evil from your flesh'(Eccles. 11:10. LXX); while the Apostle commands that always and everywhere men should 'lift up holy hands,without anger and without quarrelling" (1 Tim. 2:8). And do we not leam the same from the mysterious and ancientcustom of putting dogs out of the house during prayer? This indicates that there should be no wrath in those whopray. 'Their wine is the wrath of serpents' (Deut. 32:33. LXX); that is why the Nazarenes abstained from wine.

It is needless to insist that we should not worry about clothes or food. The Savior Himself forbids this in theGospels: 'Do not worry about what to eat or drink, or about what to wear' (cf Matt. 6:25). Such anxiety is a mark ofthe Gentiles and unbelievers, who reject the providence of the Lord and deny the Creator. An attitude of this kind isentirely wrong for Christians who believe that even two sparrows which are sold for a farthing are under the care ofthe holy angels (cf. Matt. 10: 29). The demons, however, after arousing impure thoughts, go on to suggest worries ofthis kind, so that 'Jesus conveys Himself away', because of the multitude of concerns in our mind (cf. John 5:13).The divine word can bear no fruit, being choked by our cares. Let us, then, renounce these cares, and throw themdown before the Lord, being content with what we have at the moment; and living in poverty and rags, let us day by

day rid ourselves of all that fills us with self-esteem. If anyone thinks it shameful

to live in rags, he should rememberSt Paul, who 'in cold and nakedness' patiently awaited the 'crown of righteousness' (2 Cor. 11:27; 2 Tim. 4:8). The

Apostle likened this world to a contest in an arena (cf. 1 Cor. 9:24); how then can someone clothed with anxiousthoughts run for 'the prize of the high calling of God' (Phil. 3:14), or 'wrestle against principalities, against powers,against the rulers of the darkness of this world' (Eph. 6:12)? I do not see how this is possible: for just as a runner isobstructed and weighed down by clothing, so too is the intellect by anxious thoughts - if indeed the saying is truethat the intellect is attached to its own treasure; for it is said, 'where your treasure is, there will your heart be also'(Matt. 6:21).

6. Sometimes thoughts are cut off, and sometimes they do the cutting off. Evil thoughts cut off good thoughts, and in

turn are cut off by good thoughts. The Holy Spirit therefore notes to which thought we give priority andcondemns or approves us accordingly. What I mean is something like this: the thought occurs to me to givehospitality and it is for the Lord's sake; but when the tempter attacks, this thought is cut off and in its place hesuggests giving hospitality for the sake of display. Again, the thought comes to me of giving hospitality so as toappear hospitable in the eyes of others. But this thought in its turn is cut off when a better thought comes, whichleads me to practice this virtue for the Lord's sake and not so as to gain esteem from men.

7. We have learnt, after much observation, to recognize the difference between angelic thoughts, human thoughts,

and thoughts that come from demons. Angelic thought is concerned with the true nature of things and withsearching out their spiritual essences. For example, why was gold created and scattered like sand in the lowerregions of the earth, to be found only with much toil and effort? And how, when found, is it washed in waterand committed to the fire, and then put into the hands of craftsmen who fashion it into the candlestick of thetabernacle and the censers and the vessels (cf. Exod. 25:22-39) from which, by the grace of our Savior, the kingof Babylon no longer drinks (cf. Dan. 5:2, 3)? A man such as Cleopas brings a heart bummg with thesemysteries (cf. Luke 24:32). Demonic thought, on the other hand, neither knows nor can

know such things. It can only shamelessly suggest the acquisition of physical gold, looking forward to the wealthand glory that will come from this. Finally, human thought neither seeks to acquire gold nor is concerned to knowwhat it symbolizes, but brings before the mind simply the image of gold, without passion or greed. The sameprinciple applies to other things as well.

8. There is a demon, known as the deluder, who visits the brethren especially at dawn, and leads the intellect about

from city to city, from village to village, from house to house, pretending that no passions are aroused through

such visits; but then the intellect goes on to meet and talk with old acquaintances at greater length, and so

allows its own state to be corrupted by those it encounters. Little by little it falls away from the knowledge of

God and holiness, and forgets its calling. Therefore the solitary must watch this demon, noting where he comes

from and where he ends up; for this demon does not make this long circuit without purpose and at random, but

because he wishes to corrupt the state of the solitary, so that his intellect, over-excited by all this wandering, and

intoxicated by its many meetings, may immediately fall prey to the demons of unchastity, anger or dejection -

the demons that above all others destroy its inherent brightness.

But if we really want to understand the cunning of this demon, we should not be hasty in speaking to him, or tell

others what is taking place, how he is compelling us to make these visits in our mind and how he is gradually

driving the intellect to its death - for then he will flee from us, as he cannot bear to be seen doing this; and so we

shall not grasp any of the things we are anxious to learn. But, instead, we should allow him one more day, or even

two, to play out his role, so that we can learn about his deceitfulness in detail; then, mentally rebuking him, we put

him to flight. But because during temptation the intellect is clouded and does not see exactly what is happening, do

as follows after the demon has withdrawn. Sit down and recall in solitude the things that have happened: where youstarted and where you went, in what place you were seized by the spirit of unchastity, dejection or anger and how itall happened. Examine these things closely and commit them to memory, so that you will then be ready to exposethe demon when he next approaches you. Try to become conscious of the weak spot

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Evagrios the SolitaryTexts on Discrimination in Respect of Passions and Thoughts

in yourself which he hid from you, and you will not follow him again. If you wish to enrage him, expose him atonce when he reappears, and tell him just where you went first, and where next, and so on. For he becomes veryangry and cannot bear the disgrace. And the proof that you spoke to him effectively is that the thoughts he suggestedleave you. For he cannot remain in action when he is openly exposed.

The defeat of this demon is followed by heavy sleepiness and deadness, together with a feeling of great coldnessin the eyelids, countless yawnings, and heaviness in the shoulders. But if you pray intensely all this is dispersed bythe Holy Spirit.

9. Hatred against the demons contributes greatly to our salvation and helps our growth in holiness. But we do not of

ourselves have the power to nourish this hatred into a strong plant, because the pleasure-loving spirits restrict itand encourage the soul again to indulge in its old

habitual loves. But this indulgence - or rather this gangrenethat is so hard to cure - the Physician of souls heals by abandoning us. For He permits us to undergo somefearful suffering night and day, and then the soul returns again to its original hatred, and learns like David to sayto the Lord: T hate them with perfect hatred: I count them my enemies' (Ps. 139: 22). For a man hates hisenemies with perfect hatred when he sins neither in act nor in thought - which is a sign of complete dispassion.

10. Now what am I to say about the demon who makes the soul obtuse? For I am afraid to write about him: how, at

his approach, the soul departs from its own proper state and strips itself of reverence and the fear of God, nolonger regarding sin as sin, or wickedness as wickedness; it looks on judgment and the eternal punishment ofhell as mere words: it laughs at the fire which causes the earth to tremble; and, while supposedly confessingGod, it has no understanding of His commandments. You may beat your breast as such a soul draws near to sin,but it takes no notice. You recite from the Scripture, yet it is wholly indifferent and will not hear. You point outits shame and disgrace among men, and it ignores you, like a pig that closes its eyes and charges through afence. This demon gets into the soul by way of long-continuing thoughts of self-esteem; and unless 'those daysare shortened, no flesh will be saved' (Matt. 24:22).

This is one of those demons that seldom approach brethren living[VI] 45

in a community. The reason is clear: when people round us fall into misfortune, or are afflicted by illness, or aresuffering in prison, or meet sudden death, this demon is driven out; for the soul has only to experience even a littlecompunction or compassion and the callousness caused by the demon is dissolved. We solitaries lack these things,because we live in the wilderness and sickness is rare among us. It was to banish this demon especially that the Lord

enjoined us in the Gospels to call on the sick and visit those in prison. For 'I was sick,' He says, 'and you visited Me'(Matt. 25:36).

But you should know this: if an anchorite falls in with this demon, yet does not admit unchaste thoughts or leavehis cell out of listlessness, this means he has

received the patience and self-restraint that come from heaven, and isblessed with dispassion. Those, on the other hand, who profess to practice godliness, yet choose to have dealingswith people of the world, should be on their guard against this demon. I feel ashamed to say or write more abouthim.

1 L All the demons teach the soul to love pleasure: only the demon of dejection refrains from doing this, since hecorrupts the thoughts of those he enters by cutting off every pleasure of the soul and drying it up throughdejection, for 'the bones of the dejected are dried up' (Prov. 17:22. LXX). Now if this demon attacks only to amoderate degree, he makes the anchorite more resolute; for he encourages him to seek nothing worldly and toshun all pleasures. But when the demon remains for longer, he encourages the soul to give up, or forces it to runaway. Even Job was tormented by this demon, and it was because of this that he said: '0 that I might lay handsupon myself, or at least ask someone else to do this for me' (Job 30:24. LXX).

The symbol of this demon is the viper. When used in moderation for man's good, its poison is an antidote againstthat of other venomous creatures, but when taken in excess it kills whoever takes it. It was to this demon that Pauldelivered the man at Corinth who had fallen into sin. That is why he quickly wrote again to the Corinthians saying:'Confirm your love towards him . . . lest perhaps he should be swallowed up with too great dejection' (2 Cor. 2:7-8).He knew that this spirit, in troubling men, can also bring about true repentance. It was for this reason that St John theBaptist gave the name 'progeny of vipers' to those who were goaded by this spirit to seek refuge in God, saying:'Who has warned you to flee

from the anger to come? Bring forth fruits, then, that testify to your repentance; and do not think that you can justsay within yourselves. We have Abraham as our father' (Matt. 3:7-9). But if a man imitates Abraham and leaves hiscountry and kindred (cf Gen. 12:1), he thereby becomes stronger than this demon.

12. He who has mastery over his incensive power has mastery also over the demons. But anyone who is a slave to it

is a stranger to the monastic life and to the ways of our Savior, for as David said of the Lord: 'He will teach thegentle His ways' (Ps. 25:9). The intellect of the solitary is hard for the demon to catch, for it shelters in the landof gentleness. There is scarcely any other virtue which the demons fear as much as gentleness. Moses possessedthis virtue, for he was called 'very gentle, above all men' (Num. 12:3). And David showed that it makes menworthy to be remembered by God when he said: 'Lord, remember David and all his gentleness' (Ps. 132:1.LXX). And the Savior Himself also enjoined us to imitate Him in His gentleness, saying: 'Learn from Me; for Iam gentle and humble in heart: and you will find rest for your souls' (Matt. 11:29). Now if a man abstains fromfood and drink, but becomes incensed to wrath because of evil thoughts, he is like a ship sailing the open seawith a demon for pilot. So we must keep this watchdog under careful control, training him to destroy only thewolves and not to devour the sheep, and to show the greatest gentleness towards all men.

13. In the whole range of evil thoughts, none is richer in resources than self-esteem; for it is to be found almosteverywhere, and like some cunning traitor in a city it opens the gates to all the demons. So it greatly debases theintellect of the solitary, filling it with many words and notions, and polluting the prayers through which he is

trying to heal all the wounds of his soul. All the other demons, when defeated, combine to increase the strengthof this evil thought: and through the gateway of self-esteem they all gain entry into the soul, thus making aman's last state worse than his first (cf Matt. 12:45). Self-esteem gives rise in turn to pride, which cast downfrom heaven to earth the highest of the angels, the seal of God's likeness and the crown of all beauty. So turnquickly away from pride and do not dally with it, in case you surrender your life to others and your substance tothe merciless (cf. Prov. 5:9 demon is driven away by intense prayer and by not doing or

saying anything that contributes to the sense of your own importance.

14. When the intellect of the solitary attains some small degree of dispassion, it

mounts the horse of self-esteem and

immediately rides off into cities, taking its fill of the lavish praise accorded to its repute. But by God'sprovidence the spirit of unchastity now confronts it and shuts it up in a sty of dissipation. This is to teach it tostay in bed until it is completely recovered and not to act like disobedient patients who, before they are fullycured of their disease, start taking walks and baths and so fall sick again. Let us sit still and keep our attentionfixed within ourselves, so that we advance in holiness and resist vice more strongly. Awakened in this way tospiritual knowledge, we shall acquire contemplative insight into many things: and ascending still higher, weshall receive a clearer vision of the light of our Savior.

15. I cannot write about all the villainies of the demons: and I feel ashamed to speak about them at length and indetail, for fear of harming the more simple-minded among my readers. But let me tell you about the cunning ofthe demon of unchastity. When a man has acquired dispassion in the appetitive part of his soul and shamefulthoughts cool down within him, this demon at once suggests images of men and women playing with oneanother, and makes the solitary a spectator of shameful acts and gestures. But this temptation need not bepermanent: for intense prayer, a very frugal diet, together with vigils and the development of spiritualcontemplation, drive it away like a light cloud. There are times when this cunning demon even touches theflesh, inflaming it to uncontrolled desire: and it devises endless other tricks which need not be described.

Our incensive power is also a good defense against this demon. When it is directed against evil thoughts ofthis kind, such power fills the demon with fear and destroys his designs. And this is the meaning of thestatement: 'Be angry, and do not sin' (Ps. 4:4). Such anger is a useful medicine for the soul at times oftemptation.

The demon of anger employs tactics resembling those of the demon of unchastity. For he suggests images ofour parents, friends or kinsmen being gratuitously insulted: and in this way he excites our incensive power,making us say or do something vicious to those who appear in our minds. We must be on our guard againstthese fantasies and expel them quickly from our mind, for if we

dally with them, they will prove a blazing firebrand to us during prayer. People prone to anger are especiallyliable to fall into these temptations; and if they do, then they are far from pure prayer and from the knowledge of ourSavior Jesus Christ.

16. As sheep to a good shepherd, the Lord has given to man intellections of this present world: for it is written: 'He

has given intellection to the heart of every man' (cf. Heb. 10:16). To help man He has given him mcensivepower and desire, so that with the first he may drive away wolflike intellections, while with the second he maylovingly tend the sheep, even though he is often exposed to rains and winds. In addition, God has given man thelaw, so that he may shepherd the sheep; He has given him green pastures and refreshing water (cf. Ps. 23:2), apsaltery and harp, a rod and staff. In this way he gathers hay from the mountains, and is fed and clothed fromhis Hock; for it is written, 'Does anyone feed a Hock and not drink its milk?' (1 Cor. 9:7). Therefore the solitaryought to guard this Hock night and day, making sure that none of the lambs is caught by wild beasts or falls intothe hands of thieves. Should this happen in some valley, he must at once snatch the creature from the mouth ofthe lion or the bear (cf. 1 Sam. 17:35).

What does it mean for the lambs to be caught by wild beasts? It means that when we think about our brotherwe feed on hatred; when we think about a woman we are moved with shameful lust; when we think about goldand silver we are filled with greed: and likewise when we think about gifts received from God, our mind isgorged with self-esteem. The same happens in the case of other intellections if they are seized by the passions.

We must not only guard this flock by day, but also keep watch at night: for by having fantasies of shamefuland evil things we may lose some of the sheep entrusted to us. And this is the meaning of Jacob's words: 'I didnot bring you a sheep which was caught by wild beasts: I made good of myself the thefts of the day and thethefts of the night. I was parched with heat by day, and chilled with frost by night, and sleep departed from myeyes'(Gen. 31:39-40. LXX).

If a certain listlessness overtakes us as a result of our efforts, we should climb a

little up the rock of spiritualknowledge and play on the harp, plucking the strings with the skills of such knowledge. Let us pasture oursheep below Mount Sinai, so that the God of our

fathers may speak to us, too, out of the bush (cf. Exod. 3) and show us the inner essence of signs and wonders.

17. Our spiritual nature, which had become dead through wickedness, is raised once more by Christ through thecontemplation of all the ages of creation. And through the spiritual knowledge that He gives of Himself, theFather raises the soul which has died the death of Christ. And this is the meaning of Paul's statement: 'If wehave died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him' (cf. 2 Tim. 2:11).

18. When the intellect has shed its fallen state and acquired the state of grace, then during prayer it will see its ownnature like a sapphire or the color of heaven. In Scripture this is called the realm of God that was seen by theelders on Mount Sinai (cf. Exod. 24:10).

19. Of the unclean demons, some tempt man in so far as he is man, while others disturb him in so far as he is a non-rational animal. The first, when they approach us, suggest to us notions of self-esteem, pride, envy orcensoriousness, notions by which non-rational animals are not affected; whereas the second, when theyapproach, arouse incensive power and desire in a manner contrary to nature. For these passions are common tous and to animals, and lie concealed beneath our rational and spiritual nature. Hence the Holy Spirit says of thethoughts that come to men in so far as they are men: 'I have said, you are gods, and all of you are children of themost High. But you shall die as men, and fall as one of the princes' (Ps. 82:6-7). But what does He say of thethoughts which stir in men non-rationally? 'Do not be as the horse and mule, which have no understanding:whose mouth must be controlled with bit and bridle in case they attack you' (Ps. 32:9). Now if 'the soul that sinsshall die' (Ezek. 18:4), it is clear that in so far as we die as men we are buried by men, but in so far as we areslain or fall as non-rational animals, we are devoured by vultures and ravens

whose young 'cry' to the Lord (Ps.147:9) and 'roU themselves in blood' (Job 39:30. LXX). 'He that has ears to hear, let him hear' (Matt. 11:15).

20. When one of the enemy approaches you and wounds you, and you wish to turn his sword back into his own heart

(cf. Ps. 37:37:15), then do as follows: analyze in yourself the sinful thought that has wounded you, what it is,what it consists of, and what in it

especially afflicts the intellect. Suppose, for instance, that a thought full of avarice is suggested to you.Distinguish between the component elements: the intellect which has accepted the thought, the intellection of gold,gold itself, and the passion of avarice. Then ask: in which of these does the sin consist? Is it the intellect? But howthen can the intellect be the image of God? Is it the intellection of gold? But what sensible person would ever saythat? Then is gold itself the sin? In that case, why was it created? It follows, then, that the cause of the sin is thefourth element, which is neither an objective reality, nor the intellection of something real, but is a certain noxiouspleasure which, once it is freely chosen, compels the intellect to misuse what God has created. It is this pleasure thatthe law of God commands us to cut off Now as you investigate the thought in this way and analyze it into itscomponents, it will be destroyed; and the demon will take to flight once your mind is raised to a higher level by thisspiritual knowledge.

But before using his own sword against him, you may choose first to use your sling against him. Then take a stonefrom your shepherd's bag and sling it (cf 1 Sam. 17) by asking these questions: how is it that angels and demonsaffect our world whereas we do not affect their worlds, for we cannot bring the angels closer to God, and we cannotmake the demons more impure? And how was Lucifer, the morning star, cast down to the earth (cf. Isa. 14:12),'making the deep boil like a brazen cauldron' (Job 41:31. LXX), disturbing all by his wickedness and seeking to ruleover all? Insight into these things grievously wounds the demon and puts all his troops to flight. But this is possibleonly for those who have been in some measure purified and gained a certain vision of the inner

essences of createdthings; whereas the impure have no insight into these essences, and even if they have been taught by others how tooutwit the enemy they will fail because of the great clouds of dust and the turmoil aroused by their passions at thetime of battle. For the enemy's troops must be made quiet, so that Goliath alone can face our David. In combat withall unclean thoughts, then, let us use these two methods: analysis of the thought attacking us, and the asking ofquestions about inner essences.

21. Whenever unclean thoughts have been driven off quickly, we should try to find out why this has happened. Did

the enemy fail to overpower us because there was no possibility of the thought

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idea of bread persists in a hungry man because of his hunger, and the idea of water in a thirsty man because of histhirst, so ideas of material things and of the shameful thoughts that follow a surfeit of food and drink persist in usbecause of the passions. The same is true about thoughts of self-esteem and other ideas. It is not possible for anintellect choked by such ideas to appear before God and receive the crown of righteousness. It is through beingdragged down by such thoughts that the wretched intellect, like the man in the Gospels, declines the invitation to thesupper of the knowledge of God (cf. Luke 14:18); and the man who was bound hand and foot and cast into outerdarkness (cf. Matt. 22:13) was clothed in a garment woven of these thoughts, and so was judged by the Lord, whohad invited him, not to be worthy of the wedding feast. For the true wedding garment is the dispassion of thedeiform soul which has renounced worldly desires.

In the texts On Prayer it is explained why dwelhng on ideas of sensory objects destroys true knowledge of God.

23. As we stated at the beginning, there are three chief groups of demons

opposing us in the practice of the asceticlife, and after them follows the whole army of the enemy. These three groups fight in the front line, and withimpure thoughts seduce our souls into wrongdoing. They are the demons set over the appetites of gluttony,those who suggest to us avaricious thoughts, and those who incite US to seek esteem in the eyes of men. If youlong for pure prayer, keep guard over your incensive power; and if you desire self-restraint, control your belly,and do not take your fill even of bread and water. Be vigilant in prayer and avoid all rancor. Let the teachings ofthe Holy Spirit be always with you; and use the virtues as your hands to knock at the doors of Scripture. Thendispassion of heart will arise within you, and during prayer you will see your intellect shine like a star.

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Evagrios the SolitaryExtracts from the Texts on Watchfulness

1. A monk should always act as if he was going to die tomorrow; yet he should treat his body as if it was going to

live for many years. The first cuts off the inclination to listlessness, and makes the monk more diligent; thesecond keeps his body sound and his self control well balanced.

2. He who has attained spiritual knowledge and has enjoyed the delight that comes from it will no longer succumb to

the demon of self-esteem, even when he offers him all the delights of the world; for what could the demonpromise him that is greater than spiritual contemplation? But so long as we have not tasted this knowledge, letus devote ourselves eagerly to the practice of the virtues, showing God that our aim in everything is to attainknowledge of Him.

3. We should examine the ways of the monks who have preceded us, and achieve our purpose by following their

example. One of their many helpful counsels is that a frugal and balanced diet, accompanied by the presence oflove, quickly brings a monk into the harbor of dispassion.

4. Once I visited St Makarios^ at noon and, burning with intense thirst, I asked

for a drink of water. But he said: 'Be

satisfied with the shade, for at this moment there are many travelers who lack even that.' Then, as I was tellinghim of my difficulties in practicing self-restraint, he said: 'Take heart, my son; for during the whole of twentyyears I myself have never had my fill of bread, water or sleep; but I have carefully measured my bread andwater, and snatched some sleep by leaning a little against the wall.

5. Spiritual reading, vigils and prayer bring the straying intellect

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Evagrios the SolitaryExtracts from the Texts on Watchfulness

to stability. Hunger, exertion and withdrawal from the world wither burning lust. Reciting the psalms, longsuffering and compassion curb our incensive power when it is unruly. Anything untimely or pushed o excess isshort-lived and harmful rather than helpful.

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Evagrios the SolitaryOn Prayer:

One Hundred and Fifty-Three TextsPrologue

When suffering from the fever of unclean passions, my inteUect afflicted with shameful thoughts, I have oftenbeen restored to health by your letters, as I used to be by the counsel of our great guide and teacher. This is not to bewondered at, since like the blessed Jacob you have earned a rich inheritance. Through your efforts to win Rachelyou have been given Leah (cf. Gen. 29: 25), and now you seek to be given Rachel also, since you have labored afurther seven years for her sake.

For myself, I cannot deny that although I have worked hard all night I have caught nothing. Yet at your suggestionI have again let down the nets, and I have made a large catch. They are not big fish, but there are a hundred andfifty-three of them (cf. John 21:11). These, as you requested, I am sending you in a creel of love, in the form of ahundred and fifty-three texts.

I am delighted to find you so eager for texts on prayer - eager not simply for

those written on paper with ink butalso for those which are fixed in the intellect through love and generosity. But since 'all things go in pairs, onecomplementing the other', as the wise Jesus puts it (Eccles. 42:24), please accept the letter and understand its spirit,since every written word presupposes the intellect: for where there is no intellect there is no written word. The wayof prayer is also twofold: it comprises practice of the virtues and contemplation. The same applies to numbers:literally they are quantities, but they can also signify qualities.

I have divided this discourse on prayer into one hundred and fifty-three texts. In this way I send you anevangelical feast, so that

you may delight in a symbolical number that combines a triangular with a hexagonal figure.' The triangleindicates spiritual knowledge

1. The number 153 recalls the draught of great fishes' caught by Simon Peter and the Apostles (John 21:11). In this passage Evagrios makesuse of a numerical symbolism widely employed in the ancient and medieval world:

i. A triangular number is the sum total of a continuous series of numerals, starting from the number 1. Thus 3(=l-2), (5(=l+2+3) and10(=l+2+3+4) are all triangular numbers.

ii. A square number is obtained by numbering from 1 but omitting one numeral each time. Thus 4(=l+3), 9(=l+3+5) and 16(=l+3+5+7) aresquare numbers.

iii. To obtain a pentagonal number, two numerals are omitted each time: 1+4+7+10... etc.; to obtain a hexagonal number, three numerals areomitted: 1+5+9+13...etc.

iv. A circular or spherical number is one which, when multiplied by itself, reproduces itself again as the last digit: e.g. 5x5 = 25; 6x6 =36.

Applying this to the number 153, Evagrios concludes:a. 153 is triangular, being the sum of all numerals up to 17 (inclusive).

b. It is hexagonal, being the sum of 1+5+9+13...up to 33 (inclusive).

c. It is the sum of 100 (a square number) and of 53; and 53 is in its turn the sum of 28 (a triangular number: =1+2+3=4+5+6+7) and 25 (acircular spherical number: =5 x 5).

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Evagrios the SolitaryOn Prayer:One Hundred and Fifty-Three Texts

of the Trinity, the hexagon indicates the ordered creation of the world in six days. The number one hundred issquare, while the number fifty-three is triangular and spherical; for twenty-eight is triangular, and twenty-five isspherical, five times five being twenty-five. In this way, you have a square figure to express the fourfold nature ofthe virtues, and also a spherical number, twenty-five, which by form represents the cyclic movement of time and soindicates true knowledge of this present age. For week follows week and month follows month, and time revolvesfrom year to year, and season follows season, as we see from the movement of the sun and moon, of spring andsummer, and so on. The triangle can signify knowledge of the Holy Trinity. Or you can regard the total sum, onehundred and fifty-three, as triangular and so signifying respectively the practice of the virtues, contemplation of thedivine in nature, and theology or spiritual knowledge of God: faith, hope and love (cf 1 Cor. 13:13); or gold, silverand precious stones (cf 1 Cor. 3:12). So much, then, for this number.

Do not despise the humble appearance of these texts, for you know how to be content with much or little (cf. Phil.4:12). You will recall how Christ did not reject the widow's mites (cf. Mark 12:44), but accepted them as greaterthan the rich gifts of many others. Showing in this way charity and love towards your true brethren, pray for onewho is sick that he may 'take up his bed' and walk (Mark 2 :11) by the grace of Christ. Amen.

1. Should one wish to make incense, one will mingle, according to the Law, fragrant gum, cassia, aromatic shell and

myrrh in equal amounts (cf. Exod. 30:34). These are the four virtues. With their full and balanced development,the intellect will be safe from betrayal.

2. When the soul has been purified through the keeping of all the

commandments, it makes the intellect steadfast and

able to receive the state needed for prayer.

3. Prayer is communion of the intellect with God. What state, then, does the intellect need so that it can reach out to

its Lord without deflection and commune with Him without intermediary?

4. When Moses tried to draw near to the burning bush he was forbidden to approach until he had loosed his sandals

from his feet (cf. Exod. 3:5/ If, then, you wish to behold and commune with

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Evagrios the SoHtaryOn Prayer:

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Him who is beyond sense-perception and beyond concept, you must free yourself from every impassionedthought.5. First pray for the gift of tears, so that through sorrowing you may tame what is savage in your soul. And having

confessed your transgressions to the Lord, you will obtain forgiveness from Him.

6. Pray with tears and all you ask will be heard. For the Lord rejoices greatly when you pray with tears.

7. If you do shed tears during your prayer, do not exalt yourself, thinking you are better than others. For your prayer

has received help so that you can confess your sins readily and make your peace with the Lord through yourtears. Therefore do not turn the remedy for passions into a passion, and so again provoke to anger Him who hasgiven you this grace.

8. Many people, shedding tears for their sins, forget what tears are for, and so in their folly go astray.

9. Persevere with patience in your prayer, and repulse the cares and doubts that arise within you. They disturb and

trouble you, and so slacken the intensity of your prayer.

10. When the demons see you truly eager to pray, they suggest an imaginary need for various things, and then stir up

your remembrance of these things, inciting the intellect to go after them: and when it fails to find them, itbecomes very depressed and miserable. And when the intellect is at prayer, the demons keep filling it with thethought of these things, so that it tries to discover more about them and thus loses the fruitfulness of its prayer.

11. Try to make your intellect deaf and dumb during prayer: you will then be able to pray.

12. Whenever a temptation or a feeling of contentiousness comes over you, immediately arousing you to anger or to

some senseless word, remember your prayer and how you will be judged about it, and at once the disorderlymovement within you will subside.

13. Whatever you do to avenge yourself against a brother who has done you a wrong will prove a stumbling-block to

you during prayer.

14. Prayer is the flower of gentleness and of freedom from anger.

15. Prayer is the fruit of joy and thankfulness.

16. Prayer is the remedy for gloom and despondency.

17. 'Go and sell all you have and give to the poor'

(Matt. 19:21):

and 'deny yourself, taking up your cross' (Matt. 16: 24). You will then be free from distraction when you pray.

18. If you wish to pray as you should, deny yourself all the time, and when any kind of affliction troubles you,

meditate on prayer.

19. If you endure something painful out of love for wisdom, you will find the fruit of this during prayer.

20. If you desire to pray as you ought, do not grieve anyone: otherwise you 'run in vain' (Phil. 2:16).

21. 'Leave your gift before the altar: first go away and be reconciled with your brother' (Matt. 5:24), and when you

return you will pray without disturbance. For rancor darkens the intellect of one who prays, and extinguishes thelight of his prayers.

22. Those who store up grievances and rancor in themselves are like people who draw water and pour it into a cask

full of holes.

23. If you patiently accept what comes, you will always pray with joy.

24. When you pray as you should, thoughts will come to you which make you feel that you have a real right to be

angry. But anger with your neighbor is never right. If you search you will find that things can always bearranged without anger. So do all you can not to break out into anger.

25. Take care that, while appearing to cure someone else, you yourself do not remain uncured, in this way thwarting

your prayer.

26. If you are sparing with your anger you will yourself be spared, and you will show your good sense and will be

one of those who pray.

27. If you arm yourself against anger, then you will never succumb to any kind of desire. Desire provides fuel for

anger, and anger disturbs spiritual vision, disrupting the state of prayer.

28. Do not pray only with outward forms and gestures, but with reverence and awe try to make your intellect

conscious of spiritual prayer.

29. Sometimes as soon as you start to pray, you pray well; at other times, in spite of great exertion, you do not reachyour goal. This is to make you exert yourself still more, so that, having gained the gift of prayer, you keep itsafe.

30. When an angel comes to us, all who trouble us withdraw at once, then the intellect is completely calm and prays

soundly. But at other times, when the attacks of the demons are particularly strong,

the intellect does not have a moment's respite. This is because it is weakened by the passions to which it hassuccumbed in the past. But if it goes on searching, it will find, and if it knocks, the door will be opened (cf. Matt.7:8).

31. Do not pray for the fulfillment of your wishes, for they may not accord with the will of God. But pray as you

have been taught, saying: Thy will be done in me (cf Luke 22:42). Always entreat Him in this way - that Hiswill be done. For He desires what is good and profitable for you, whereas you do not always ask for this.

32. Often when I have prayed I have asked for what I thought was good, and persisted in my petition, stupidlyimportuning the will of God, and not leaving it to Him to arrange things as He knows is best for me. But when Ihave obtained what I asked for, I have been very sorry that I did not ask for the will of God to be done; becausethe thing turned out not to be as I had thought.

33. What is good, except God? Then let us leave to Him everything that concerns us and all will be well. For Hewho is good is naturally also a giver of good gifts.

34. Do not be distressed if you do not at once receive from God what you ask. He wishes to give you somethingbetter - to make you persevere in your prayer. For what is better than to enjoy the love of God and to be incommunion with Him?

35. Undistracted prayer is the highest intellection of the intellect.

36. Prayer is the ascent of the intellect to God.

37. If you long for prayer, renounce all to gain all.

38. Pray first for the purification of the passions; secondly, for deliverance from ignorance and forgetfulness; andthirdly, for deliverance from all temptation, trial and dereliction.

39. In your prayer seek only righteousness and the kingdom of God, that is, virtue and spiritual knowledge; and

everything else 'will be given to you' (Matt. 6:33).

40. It is right to pray not only for your own purification, but also for that of all your fellow men, and so to imitate the

angels.

41. See whether you stand truly before God in your prayer, or are overcome by the desire for human praise, usingprolonged prayer as a disguise.

42. Whether you pray with brethren or alone, try to pray not simply as a routine, but with conscious awareness ofyour prayer.

43. Conscious awareness of prayer is concentration accompanied[VI] 61

by reverence, compunction and distress of soul as it confesses its sins with

inward sorrow.

44. If your intellect is still distracted during prayer, you do not yet know what it is to pray as a monk; but yourprayer is still worldly, embellishing the outer tabernacle.

45. When you pray, keep close watch on your memory, so that it does not distract you with recollections of yourpast. But make yourself aware that you are standing before God. For by nature the intellect is apt to be carriedaway by memories during prayer.

46. While you are praying, the memory brings before you fantasies either of past things, or of recent concerns, or of

the face of someone who has irritated you.

47. The demon is very envious of us when we pray, and uses every kind of trick to thwart our purpose. Therefore he

is always using our memory to stir up thoughts of various things and our flesh to arouse the passions, in order toobstruct our way of ascent to God.

48. When after many attempts the cunning demon fails to hinder the prayer of the righteous man, he slackens hisefforts a little, and then gets his own back when the man has finished praying. Either he provokes the man toanger, and so destroys the good effects of the prayer, or else he excites him to senseless pleasure, and sodegrades his intellect.

49. Having prayed as you should, expect the demon to attack you: so stand on guard, ready to protect the fruits ofyour prayer. For this from the start has been your appointed task: to cultivate and to protect (cf Gen. 2:15).Therefore, having cultivated, do not leave the fruits unprotected; otherwise you will gain nothing from yourprayer.

50. The warfare between us and the demons is waged solely on account of spiritual prayer. For prayer is extremelyhateful and offensive to them, whereas it leads us to salvation and peace.

51. What is it that the demons wish to excite in us? Gluttony, unchastity, avarice, anger, rancor, and the rest of the

passions, so that the intellect grows coarse and cannot pray as it ought. For when the passions are aroused in thenon-rational part of our nature, they do not allow the intellect to function properly.

52. We practice the virtues in order to achieve contemplation of the inner essences (logoi) of created things, andfrom this we pass to

contemplation of the Logos who gives them their being; and He manifests Himseh" when we are in the state ofprayer.

53. The state of prayer is one of dispassion, which by virtue of the most intense love transports to the noetic realmthe intellect that longs for wisdom.

54. He who wishes to pray truly must not only control his mcensive power and his desire, but must also free himself

from every impassioned thought.

55. He who loves God is always communing with Him as his Father, repulsing every impassioned thought.

56. One who has attained dispassion has not necessarily achieved pure prayer. For he may still be occupied withthoughts which, though dispassionate, distract him and keep him far from God.

57. When the intellect no longer dallies with dispassionate thoughts about various things, it has not necessarilyreached the realm of prayer: for it may still be contemplating the inner essences of these things. And thoughsuch contemplation is dispassionate, yet since it is of created things, it impresses their forms upon the intellectand keeps it away from God.

58. If the intellect has not risen above the contemplation of the created world, it has not yet beheld the realm of God

perfectly. For it may be occupied with the knowledge of intelligible things and so involved in their multiplicity.

59. If you wish to pray, you have need of God, 'who gives prayer to him who prays' (1 Sam. 2:9. LXX). Invoke Him,

then, saying: 'Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come' (Matt. 6:9-10) - that is, the Holy Spirit and Thy only-begotten Son. For so He taught us, saying: 'Worship the Father in spirit and in truth' (John 4: 24).

60. He who prays in spirit and in truth is no longer dependent on created things when honoring the Creator, butpraises Him for and in Himself.

61. If you are a theologian, you will pray truly. And if you pray truly, you are a theologian.

62. When your intellect in its great longing for God gradually withdraws from the flesh and turns away from allthoughts that have their source in your sense-perception, memory or soul-body temperament, and when itbecomes full of reverence and joy,

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then you may conclude that you are close to the frontiers of prayer.

63. The Holy Spirit, out of compassion for our weakness, comes to us even when we are impure. And if only Hefinds our intellect truly praying to Him, He enters it and puts to flight the whole array of thoughts and ideascircling within it, and He arouses it to a longing for spiritual prayer.

64. While all else produces thoughts, ideas and speculations in the intellect through changes in the body, the Lorddoes the opposite: by entering the intellect. He fills it with whatever knowledge He wishes: and through theintellect He calms the uncontrolled impulses in the body.

65. Whoever loves true prayer and yet becomes angry or resentful is his own enemy. He is like a man who wants to

see clearly and yet inflicts damage on his own eyes.

66. If you long to pray, do nothing that is opposed to prayer, so that God may draw near and be with you.

67. When you are praying, do not shape within yourself any image of the Deity, and do not let your intellect be

stamped with the impress of any form: but approach the Immaterial in an immaterial manner, and then you willunderstand.

68. Be on your guard against the tricks of the demons. While you are praying purely and calmly, sometimes they

suddenly bring before you some strange and alien form, making you imagine in your conceit that the Deity isthere. They are trying to persuade you that the object suddenly disclosed to you is the Deity, whereas the Deitydoes not possess quantity and form.

69. When the jealous demon fails to stir up our memory during prayer, he disturbs the soul-body temperament, so as

to form some strange fantasy in the intellect. Since your intellect is usually preoccupied with thoughts it iseasily diverted: instead of pursuing immaterial and formless knowledge, it is deceived, mistaking smoke forlight.

70. Stand on guard and protect your intellect from thoughts while you pray. Then your intellect will complete itsprayer and continue in the tranquility that is natural to it. In this way He who has compassion on the ignorantwill come to you, and you will receive the blessed gift of prayer.

71. You cannot attain pure prayer while entangled in material

things and agitated by constant cares. For prayer means the shedding of thoughts.

72. A man who is tied up cannot run. Nor can the intellect that is a slave to passion perceive the realm of spiritual

prayer. For it is dragged about by impassioned thoughts and cannot stay still.

73. When the. intellect attains prayer that is pure and free from passion, the demons attack no longer with sinisterthoughts but with thoughts of what is good. For they suggest to it an illusion of God's glory in a form pleasingto the senses, so as to make it think that it has realized the final aim of prayer. A man who possesses spiritualknowledge has said that this illusion results from the passion of self-esteem and from the demon's touch on acertain area of the brain.

74. I think that the demon, by touching this area, changes the light surrounding the intellect as he likes. In this way

he uses the passion of self-esteem to stir up in the intellect a thought which fatuously attributes form andlocation to divine and principial knowledge. Not being disturbed by impure and carnal passions, but supposingitself to be in a state of purity, the intellect imagines that there is no longer any adverse energy within it. It thenmistakes for a divine manifestation the appearance produced in it by the demon, who cunningly manipulates thebrain and converts the light surrounding the intellect into a form, as we have described.

75. When the angel of God comes to us, with his presence alone he puts an end to all adverse energy within theintellect and makes its light energize without illusion.

76. The statement in the Apocalypse that the angel brought incense and offered it with the prayers of the saints (cf.Rev. 8:3) refers, I think, to this grace which is energized through the angel. For it instills knowledge of trueprayer, so that the intellect stands firm, free from all agitation, hstlessness and negligence.

77. The bowls of incense which the twenty-four elders offered are said to be the prayers of the saints. By a bowlshould be understood friendship with God or perfect spiritual love, whereby prayer is energized in spirit and intruth.

78. When you think that you do not need tears for your sins during prayer, reflect on this: you should always be in

God, and yet you are still far from Him. Then you will weep with greater feeling.

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79. Surely, when you do realize where you are, you will gladly sorrow and, like Isaiah, will reproach yourselfbecause, being unclean, and dwelling in the midst of an unclean people - that is, of enemies - you dare to standbefore the Lord of hosts (cf Isa. 6:5).

80. If you pray truly, you will gain great assurance; angels will come to you as they came to Daniel, and they will

illuminate you with knowledge of the inner essences of created things (cf. Dan. 2:19).

81. Know that the holy angels encourage us to pray and stand beside us, rejoicing and praying for us (cf Tobit

12:12). Therefore, if we are negligent and admit thoughts from the enemy, we greatly provoke the angels. Forwhile they struggle hard on our behalf we do not even take the trouble to pray to God for ourselves, but wedespise their services to us and, abandoning their Lord and God, we consort with unclean demons.

82. Pray gently and calmly, sing with understanding and rhythm, then you will soar like a young eagle high in the

heavens.

83. Psalmody calms the passions and curbs the uncontrolled impulses in the body: and prayer enables the intellect to

activate its own energy.

84. Prayer is the energy which accords with the dignity of the intellect; it is the intellect's true and highest activity.

85. Psalmody appertains to the wisdom of the world of multiplicity; prayer is the prelude to the immaterialknowledge of the One.

86. Spiritual knowledge has great beauty: it is the helpmate of prayer, awakening the noetic power of the intellect to

contemplation of divine knowledge.

87. If you have not yet received the gift of prayer or psalmody, persevere patiently and you will receive it.

88. 'And He spake a parable to them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to lose heart.' So do not lose

heart and despair because you have not yet received the gift of prayer. You will receive it later. In the sameparable we read: 'Though I do not fear God, or man's opinion, yet because this widow troubles me, I willvindicate her.' Similarly, God will speedily vindicate those who cry

to Him day and night (cf Luke 18:1-8). Take heart, then, and persevere diligently in holy prayer.

89. You should wish for your affairs to turn out, not as you think best, but according to God's will. Then you will be

undisturbed and thankful in your prayer.

90. Even if you think you are with God, be on your guard against the demon of unchastity. For he is very wily and

jealous: he tries to outwit the activity and watchfulness of your intellect and to draw it away from God, when itstands before Him with reverence and fear.9L If you cultivate prayer, be ready for the attacks of demons and endure them resolutely; for they will come at youlike wild beasts and maltreat your whole body.

92. Prepare yourself like an experienced fighter, and even if you see a sudden apparition do not be shaken; andshould you see a sword drawn against you, or a torch thrust into your face, do not be alarmed. Should you seeeven some

loathsome and bloody figure, do not panic; but stand fast, boldly affirming your faith, and you willbe more resolute in confronting your enemies.

93. He who bears distress patiently will attain joy, and he who endures the repulsive will know delight.

94. Take care that the crafty demons do not deceive you with some vision; be on your guard, turn to prayer and ask

God to show you if the intellection comes from Him and, if it does not, to dispel the illusion at once. Do not beafraid, for if you pray fervently to God, the demons will retreat, lashed by His unseen power.

95. You should be aware of this trick: at times the demons split into two groups; and when you call for help against

one group, the other will come in the guise of angels and drive away the first, so that you are deceived intobelieving that they are truly angels.

96. Cultivate great humility and courage, and you will escape the power of the demons; 'no plague shall come nearyour dwelling, for He shall give His angels charge over you' (Ps. 91:10-11). And they will invisibly repel all theenergy of the enemy.

97. He who practices pure prayer will hear the demons crashing and banging, shouting and cursing; yet he will not

be overwhelmed or go out of his mind. But he will say to God: 'I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me' (Ps.23:4), and other words of this kind.

98. At the time of such trials, use a brief but intense prayer.

99. If the demons suddenly threaten to appear out of the air, to[VI] 67

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make you panic and to take possession of your intellect, do not be frightened and pay no attention to their threats.For they are trying to terrify you, to see if you

take notice of them or scorn them utterly.

100. When you stand in prayer before God the Almighty, who created all things and takes thought for all, why areyou so foolish as to forget the fear of God and to be scared of mosquitoes and cockroaches? Have you not heardit said, 'You shall fear the Lord your God' (Deut. 6:13); or again 'Fear and dread shall fall upon them' (Exod.15:16)?

101. Bread is food for the body and holiness is food for the soul; spiritual prayer is food for the intellect.

102. When you are in the inner temple pray not as the Pharisee but as the publican, so that you too are set free by theLord (cf Luke 18:10-14).

103. Try not to pray against anyone in your prayer, so that you do not destroy what you are building, and make yourprayer loathsome.

104. Learn from the man who owed the ten thousand talents that, if you do not forgive your debtor, you yourself willnot be forgiven. For it is said, 'He delivered him to the tormentors' (Matt. 18:34).

105. Detach yourself from concern for the body when you pray: do not let the sting of a flea or a fly, the bite of alouse or a mosquito, deprive you of the fruits of your prayer.

106. We have heard that the evil one attacked a certain saint so fiercely as he prayed that, when the saint lifted up hishands, the evil one changed himself into a lion and raising his front legs fixed his claws into the saint's thighs;and he kept them there until the saint lowered his hands, which was only when he had come to the end of hisusual prayers.

107. There is too the case of that great monk, John the Small. He lived the hesychastic life in a pit, and hiscommunion with God was not interrupted even when a demon in the form of a serpent wound itself round him,chewed his flesh and spat it out into his face.

108. You have surely read the lives of the monks of Tabennesis. When Abba Theodore was preaching to thebrethren, two vipers crawled under his feet: but he calmly made an arch of his feet and let them stay there untilhe had finished his sermon. Then he showed the vipers to the brethren and told them what had

happened.

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109. We read how, when another spiritual brother was praying, a viper came and wound itself round his leg. But hedid not lower his hands until he had finished all his usual prayers; and because he loved God more than himself,he was not harmed at all.

110. Do not let your eyes be distracted during prayer, but detach yourself from concern with body and soul, and giveall your attention to the intellect.

111. Another saint living the hesychastic life in the desert was attacked, as he was praying, by demons who for twoweeks tossed him like a ball in the air, catching him in his rush-mat. They were completely unsuccessful indistracting his mind from fiery prayer.

112. When another monk was practicing inner prayer as he journeyed in the desert, two angels came and walked oneither side of him. But he paid no heed to them, for he did not wish to lose what was better. He remembered thewords of the Apostle: 'Neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers . . . shall be able to separate us from thelove of Christ* (Rom. 8: 38-39).

113. The monk becomes equal to the angels through prayer, because of his longing to 'behold the face of the Fatherwho is in heaven' (cf. Matt. 18:10).

114. Never try to see a form or shape during prayer.

115. Do not long to have a sensory image of angels or powers or Christ, for this would be madness: it would be totake a wolf as your shepherd and to worship your enemies, the demons.

116. Self-esteem is the start of illusions in the intellect. Under its impulse, the intellect attempts to enclose the Deityin shapes and forms.

117. 1 shall say again what 1 have said elsewhere: blessed is the intellect that is completely free from forms duringprayer.

118. Blessed is the intellect that, undistracted in its prayer, acquires an ever greater longing for God.

119. Blessed is the intellect that during prayer is free from materiality and stripped of all possessions.

120. Blessed is the intellect that has acquired complete freedom from sensations during prayer.

121. Blessed is the monk who regards every man as God after God.

122. Blessed is the monk who looks with great joy on everyone's salvation and progress as if they were his own.

123. Blessed is the monk who regards himself as 'the off-scouring of all things' (1 Cor. 4:13).

124. A monk is one who is separated from all and united with all.

125. A monk is one who regards himself as linked with every man, through always seeing himself in each.

126. The man who always dedicates his first thoughts to God has perfect prayer.

127. If you want to pray as a monk, shun all lies and take no oath. Otherwise you vainly pretend to be what you arenot.

128. If you wish to pray in spirit, be detached from the flesh, and no cloud will darken you during prayer.

129. Entrust to God the needs of your body, and it will be clear that you entrust to Him the needs of your spirit also.

130. If you receive what has been promised, you will reign over all things, and, keeping these promises in mind, youwill gladly endure your present poverty, spiritual and material.

131. Do not shun poverty and affliction, the fuel that gives wings to prayer.

132. Let the virtues of the body lead you to those of the soul; and the virtues of the soul to those of the spirit; andthese, in turn, to immaterial and principial knowledge.

133. If you are praying to overcome some thought, and it subsides easily, examine carefully how this has comeabout; otherwise you may be deluded into attributing the cause to yourself.

134. There are times when the demons suggest thoughts to you and then urge you to rebut them with prayer;whereupon they withdraw of their own accord, so as to deceive you into imagining that you have begun toovercome such thoughts and to rout the demons.

135. If you pray to overcome a passion or a demon who is troubling you, remember the words: '1 will pursue myenemies, and overtake them: and 1 will not turn back until they are consumed. 1 will dash them to pieces andthey shall not be able to stand: they shall fall under my feet' (Ps. 18:37-38. LXX). Say this when needed and soarm yourself with humility against your enemies.

136. Do not think that you have acquired holiness unless you have reached the point of shedding your blood to attainit. For, according to the Apostle, we must battle unremittingly against sin even if it means death (cf. Eph. 6:11-17;Heb. 12:4).

137. If you do good to one person, you may be wronged by another and so feel injured, and say or do somethingstupid, thus dissipating by your bad action what you gained by your good action. This is just what the demonswant; so always be attentive.

138. Be ready for the attacks of the demons, and think how to avoid becoming their slave.

139. At night the cunning demons try to disturb the spiritual teacher by direct attack; in the daytime, they attack himthrough other people, besieging him with

slander, distraction and danger.

140. Do not try to avoid the fullers. Let them beat, trample, stretch and smooth; and your garments will be all thebrighter.

141. So long as you have not renounced the passions, and your intellect is still opposed to holiness and truth, youwill not find the fragrance of incense in your breast.

142. Do you have a longing for prayer? Then leave the things of this world and live your life in heaven, not justtheoretically but in angelic action and godlike knowledge.

143. If it is only in times of adversity that you remember the Judge and how awe-inspiring and impartial He is, youhave not yet learned 'to serve the Lord with fear and rejoice in Him with trembling' (Ps. 2:11). For even in astate of spiritual peace and blessedness you should still worship Him with reverence and awe.

144. Until a man is completely changed by repentance, he will be wise always to remember his sins with sorrow andto recall the eternal fire which they justly deserve.

145. If a man, still enmeshed in sin and anger, dares shamelessly to reach out for knowledge of divine things, or

even to embark upon immaterial prayer, he deserves the rebuke given by the Apostle: for it is dangerous for himto pray with head bare and uncovered. Such a soul, he says, ought 'to have a veil on her head because of theangels' who are present (cf. 1 Cor. 11:5-l), and to be clothed in due reverence and humility.

146. Just as persistent staring at the sun in its noonday brilliance will not cure a man suffering from ophthalmia, sothe counterfeit practice of fearful and supernal prayer - which is properly to be performed in spirit and in truth -will in no way benefit an intellect that is passionate and impure; on the contrary, such practice will provoke thewrath of God against the intellect.

147. If He who is in want of nothing and shows no favors did

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not receive the man coming with a gift to the altar until he was reconciled with his neighbor who had somethingagainst him (cf Matt. 5:23-24), consider how much we must be on guard and use discrimination if we are to offer atthe spiritual altar incense that is acceptable to God.

148. Do not delight in words or in glory. Otherwise the demons will no longer work behind your back, butopenly before your face: and they will laugh you to scorn during prayer, drawing you away and enticing youinto strange thoughts.

149. If you seek prayer attentively you will find it; for nothing is more essential to prayer than attentiveness. So doall you can to acquire it.

150. As sight is superior to all the other senses, so prayer is more divine than all the other virtues.

151. The value of prayer lies not in mere quantity but in its qualit\'. This is shown by the contrast of the two menwho went up into the temple (cf. Luke 18:10), and by the injunction: 'When you pray, do not use vainrepetitions' (Matt. 6:7).

152. So long as you give attention to the beauty of the body, and your intellect delights in the outside of thetabernacle, you have not yet perceived the realm of prayer and are still far from treading its blessed path.

153. If when praying no other joy can attract you, then truly you have found prayer.

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St John Cassian

(c. 360-435)

(lolume l,pp. 72-108)

Introductory Note

St John Cassian, often styled 'Cassian the Roman' in Greek sources, was born around the year 360, probably in RomanScythia. As a young man he joined a monastery in Bethlehem, but around 385-6 he traveled with his friend Germanos to Egypt,where he remained until 399, becoming a disciple of Evagrios. During 401-5 he was at Constantinople, where he was ordaineddeacon; here he became a disciple and ardent supporter of St John Chrysostom. In 405 he traveled to the West, remaining forsome years in Rome and then moving to Gaul. Either in Rome or in Gaul he was ordained priest. Around 415 he founded twomonasteries near Marseilles, one for men and the other for women. His two main works are the Institutes and the Conferences,both written in Latin around the years 425-8. In these Cassian summarized the spiritual teaching which he had received in Egypt,adapting it to the somewhat different conditions of the West. His writings exercised a formative influence on Latin monasticismand are especially commended in the Rule of St Benedict. Cassian died around 435 and is commemorated in the OrthodoxChurch as a saint, his feast-day falling on 29 Februaiy.

St Nikodimos included in the PhilokaUa a Greek summary of certain parts of Cassian's main writings. The first text. On theEight Vices, is taken from the Institutes, Books V-XII; the second text. On the Holy Fathers ofSketis and on Discrimination,comes from the Conferences, Books I-II. In both cases the Greek version considerably abbreviates the Latin original.'

There is a fiill English translation of the Institutes and the Conferences by E. C. S. Gibson, in P. Schaff and H. Wace (editors), A SelectLibrary ofNicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church, Second Series, Vol. XI (Oxford/New York, 1894; reprinted, Grand Rapids,1955). The best study on Cassian in English is 0. Chadwick, John Cassian. A Studv in Primitive Monasticism (Cambridge, 1950; 2nd edition,Cambridge, 1968).

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On the Eight VicesWritten for Bishop Kastor

Having composed the treatise on coenobitic institutions, I am now once more encouraged by your prayers toattempt to write something about the eight vices: gluttony, unchastity, avarice, anger, dejection, hstlessness, self-esteem and pride.

On Control of the Stomach

I shall speak first about control of the stomach, the opposite to gluttony, and about how to fast and what and howmuch to eat. I shall say nothing on my own account, but only what I have received from the Holy Fathers. They havenot given us only a single rule for fasting or a single standard and measure for eating, because not everyone has thesame strength; age, illness or delicacy of body create differences. But they have given us all a single goal: to avoid

over-eating and the filling of our bellies. They also found a day's fast to be more beneficial and a greater help towardpurity than one extending over a period of three, four, or even seven days. Someone who fasts for too long, they say,often ends up by eating too much food. The result is that at times the body becomes enervated through undue lack offood and sluggish over its spiritual exercises, while at other times, weighed down by the mass of food it has eaten, itmakes the soul listless and slack.

They also found that the eating of greens or pulse did not agree with everyone, and that not everyone could live ondry bread. One man, they said, could eat two pounds of dry bread and still be hungry, while another might eat apound, or only six ounces, and be satisfied. As I said, the Fathers have handed down a single basic rule

of self-control: 'do not be deceived by the filling of the belly' (Prov. 24:15. LXX), or be led astray by the pleasure ofthe palate. It is not only the variety of foodstuffs that kindles the fiery darts of unchastity, but also their quantity.Whatever the kind of food with which it is filled, the belly engenders the seed of profligacy. It is not only too muchwine that besots our mind: too

much water or too much of anything makes it drowsy and stupefied. The Sodomiteswere destroyed not because of too much wine or too much of other foods, but because of a surfeit of bread, as theProphet teUs us (cf Ezek. 16:49).

Bodily illness is not an obstacle to purity of heart, provided we give the body what its illness requires, not whatgratifies our desire for pleasure. Food is to be taken in so far as it supports our life, but not to the extent of enslavingus to the impulses of desire. To eat moderately and reasonably is to keep the body in health, not to deprive it ofholiness.

A clear rule for self-control handed down by the Fathers is this: stop eating while still hungry and do not continueuntil you are satisfied. When the Apostle said, 'Make no provision to fulfill the desires of the flesh' (Rom. 13:14), hewas not forbidding us to provide for the needs of life: he was warning us against self-indulgence. Moreover, byitself abstinence from food does not contribute to perfect purity of soul unless the other virtues are active as well.Humility, for example, practiced through obedience in our work and through bodily hardship, is a great help. If weavoid avarice not only by having no money, but also by not wanting to have any, this leads us towards purity ofsoul. Freedom from anger, from dejection, self-esteem and pride also contributes to purity of soul in general, whileself-control and fasting are especially important for bringing about that specific purity of soul which comes throughrestraint and moderation. No one whose stomach is full can fight mentally against the demon of unchastity. Ourinitial struggle therefore must be to gain control of our stomach and to bring our body into subjection not onlythrough fasting but also through vigils, labors and spiritual, reading, and through concentrating our heart on fear ofGehenna and on longing for the kingdom of heaven.

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On the Eight VicesOn the Demon of Unchastity and the Desire of the Flesh

Our second struggle is against the demon of unchastity and the desire of the flesh, a desire which begins to troubleman from the time of his youth. This harsh struggle has to be fought in both soul and body, and not simply in thesoul, as is the case with other faults. We therefore have to fight it on two fronts.

Bodily fasting alone is not enough to bring about perfect self-restraint and trae

purity; it must be accompanied bycontrition of heart, intense prayer to God, frequent meditation on the Scriptures, toil and manual labor. These areable to check the restless impulses of the soul and to recall it from its shameful fantasies. Humility of soul helpsmore than everything else, however, and without it no one can overcome unchastity or any other sin. In the firstplace, then, we must take the utmost care to guard the heart from base thoughts, for, according to the Lord, 'out ofthe heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, unchastity' and so on (Matt. 15:19).

We are told to fast not only to mortify our body, but also to keep our intellect watchful, so that it will not beobscured because of the amount of food we have eaten and thus be unable to guard its thoughts. We must nottherefore expend all our effort in bodily fasting; we must also give attention to our thoughts and to spiritualmeditation, since otherwise we will not be able to advance to the heights of true purity and chastity. As our Lord hassaid, we should 'cleanse first the inside of the cup and plate, so that their outside may also be clean' (Matt. 23:26).

If we are really eager, as the Apostle puts it, to 'struggle lawfully' and to 'be crowned" (2 Tim. 2:5j for overcomingthe impure spirit of unchastity, we should not trast in our own strength arid ascetic practice, but in the help of ourMaster, God. No one ceases to be attacked by this demon until he truly believes that he will be healed and reach theheights of purity not through his own effort and labor, but through the aid and protection of God. For such a victoryis beyond man's natural powers. Indeed, he who has trampled down the pleasures and provocations of the flesh is ina certain sense outside the body. Thus, no one can soar to this high and heavenly prize of holiness on his own wingsand learn to imitate the angels,

unless the grace of God leads him upwards from this earthly mire.

No virtue makes flesh-bound man so like a spiritual angel as does self-restraint, for it enables those still living onearth to become, as the Apostle says, 'citizens of heaven' (cf Phil. 3:20). A sign that we have acquired this virtueperfectly is that our soul ignores those images which the defiled fantasy produces during sleep;

for even if theproduction of such images is not a sin, nevertheless it is a sign that the soul is ill and has not been freed frompassion. We should therefore regard the defiled fantasies that arise in us during sleep as the proof of previousindolence and weakness still existing a us; since the emission which takes place while we are relaxed in sleepreveals the sickness that lies hidden in our souls. Because of this the Doctor of our souls has also placed the remedyin the hidden regions of the soul, recognizing that the cause of our sickness lies there when He says: 'Whoever looksat a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart' (Matt. 5:28). He seeks to correct not somuch our inquisitive and unchaste eyes as the soul which has its seat within and makes bad use of the eyes which

God gave it for good purposes. That is why the Book of Proverbs in its wisdom does not say: 'Guard your eyes withall diligence' but 'Guard your heart with all diligence' (Prov. 4:23), imposing the remedy of diligence in the firstinstance upon that which makes use of the eyes for whatever purpose it desires.

The way to keep guard over our heart is immediately to expel from the mind every demon-inspired recollection ofwomen - even of mother or sister or any other devout woman - lest by dwelling on it for too long the mind is thrownheadlong by the deceiver into debased and pernicious thoughts. The commandment given by God to the first man,Adam, told him to keep watch over the head of the serpent (cf. Gen. 3:15. LXX), that is, over the first inklings of thepernicious thoughts by means of which the serpent tries to creep into our souls. If we do not admit the serpent'shead, which is the provocation of the thought, we will not admit the rest of its body - that is, the assent* to thesensual pleasure which the thought suggests - and so debase the mind towards the illicit act itself.

As it is written, we should 'early in the morning destroy all the wicked of the earth' (Ps. 101:8), distinguishing inthe light of divine knowledge' our sinful thoughts and then eradicating them completely from the earth - our hearts -in accordance with the

teaching of the Lord. While the-children of Babylon - by which I mean our wicked thoughts - are still young, weshould dash them to the ground and crush them against the rock, which is Christ (cf Ps. 137:9; 1 Cor. 16:4). If thesethoughts grow stronger because we assent to them, we will not be able to overcome them without much pain andlabor.

It is good to remember the sayings of the Fathers as well as the passages from Holy Scripture cited above. Forexample, St Basil, Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, said; 'I have not known a woman and yet I am not a virgin.'He recognized that the gift of virginity is achieved not so much by abstaining from intercourse with woman as byholiness and purity of soul, which in its turn is achieved through fear of God. The Fathers also say that we cannotfully acquire the virtue of purity unless we have first acquired real humility of heart. And we will not be grantedtrue spiritual knowledge so long as the passion of unchastity lies hidden in the depths of our souls.

To bring this section of our treatise to a close, let us recall one of the Apostle's sayings which further illustrateshis teaching on how to acquire self-restraint. He says; 'Pursue peace with all men and the holiness without which noone will see the Lord' (Heb. 12:14). It is clear that he is talking about self-restraint from what follows: 'Lest there beany unchaste or profane person, such as Esau' (Heb. 12:16). The more heavenly and angelic the degree of holiness,the heavier are the enemies' attacks to which it is subjected. We should therefore try to achieve not only bodilycontrol, but also contrition of heart with frequent prayers of repentance, so that with the dew of the Holy Spirit wemay extinguish the furnace of our flesh, kindled daily by the king of Babylon with the bellows of desire (cf. Dan.3:19). In addition, a great weapon has been given us in the form of sacred vigils; for just as the watch we keep overour droughts by day brings us holiness at night. So vigil at night brings purity to the soul by day.

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Our third struggle is against the demon of avarice, a demon clearly foreign to our nature, who only gains entryinto a monk because he is lacking in faith. The other passions, such as anger and desire, seem to be occasioned bythe body and in

some sense implanted in

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us at birth. Hence they are conquered only after a long time. The sickness of avarice, on the contrary, can withdiligence and attention be cut off more readily, because ft enters from outside. If neglected, however, it becomeseven harder to get rid of and more destructive than the other passions, for according to the Apostle it is 'the root ofaUevil'Cl Tim. 6:10).

Let us look at it in this fashion. Movement occurs in the sexual organs not only of young children who cannot yetdistinguish between good and evil, but also of the smallest infants still at their mother's breast. The latter, althoughquite ignorant of sensual pleasure, nevertheless manifest such natural movements in the flesh. Similarly, theincensive power exists in infants, as we can see when they are roused against anyone hurting them. I say this not toaccuse nature of being the cause of sin - heaven forbid! - but to show that the incensive power and desire, even ifimplanted in man by the Creator for a good purpose, appear to change through neglect from being natural in thebody into something that is unnatural. Movement in the sexual organs was given to us by the Creator for procreationand the continuation of the species, not for unchastity: while incensive power was planted in us for our salvation, sothat we could manifest it against wickedness, but not so that we could act like wild beasts towards our fellow men.Even if we make bad use of these passions, nature itself is not therefore sinful, nor should we blame the Creator. Aman who gives someone a knife for some necessary and useful purpose is not to blame if that person uses it tocommit murder.

This has been said to make it clear that avarice is a passion deriving, not from our nature, but solely from an eviland perverted use of our free will. When this sickness finds the soul lukewarm and lacking in faith at the start of theascetic path, it suggests to us various apparently justifiable and sensible reasons for keeping back something of whatwe possess. It conjures up in a monk's mind a picture of a lengthy old age and bodily illness; and it persuades himthat the necessities of life provided by the monastery are insufficient to sustain a healthy

man, much less an ill one;that in the monastery the sick, instead of receiving proper attention, are hardly cared for at all; and that unless he hassome money tucked away, he will die a miserable death. Finally, it convinces him that he will not be able to remainlong in the monastery because of the load of

his work and the strictness of the abbot. When with thoughts like these it has seduced his mind with the idea ofconcealing any sum, however trifling, it persuades him to learn, unknown to the abbot, some handicraft throughwhich he can increase his cherished hoardings. Then it deceives the wretched monk with secret expectations,making him imagine what he will earn from his handicraft, and the comfort and security which will result from it.

Now completely given over to the thought of gain, he notices none of the evil passions which attack him: his ragingfury when he happens to sustain a loss, his gloom and dejection when he falls short of the gain he hoped for. Just asfor other people the belly is a god, so for him is money. That is why the Apostle, knowing this, calls avarice not only'the root of all evil' but 'idolatry' as well (Col. 3:5).

How is it that this sickness can so pervert a man that he ends up as an idolater? It is because he now fixes hisintellect on the love, not of God, but of the images of men stamped on gold. A monk darkened by such thoughts andlaunched on the downward path can no longer be obedient. He is irritable and resentful, and grumbles about everytask. He answers back and, having lost his sense of respect, behaves like a stubborn, uncontrollable horse. He is notsatisfied with the day's ration of food and complains that he cannot put up with such conditions for ever. NeitherGod's presence, he says, nor the possibility of his own salvation is confined to the monastery; and, he concludes, hewill perish if he does not leave it. He is so excited and encouraged in these perverse thoughts by his secret hoardingsthat he even plans to quit the monastery. Then he replies proudly and harshly no matter what he is told to do, andpays no heed if he sees something in the monastery that needs to be set right, considering himself a stranger andoutsider and finding fault with all that takes place. Then he seeks excuses for being angry or injured, so that he willnot appear to be leaving the monastery

frivolously and without cause. He does not even shrink from trying throughgossip and idle talk to seduce someone else into leaving with him, wishing to have an accomplice in his sinfulaction.

Because the avaricious monk is so fired with desire for private wealth he will never be able to live at peace in amonastery or under a rule. When like a wolf the demon has snatched him from the fold and separated him from theHock, he makes ready to devour him: he sets-him to work day and night m his cell on the very tasks which

he complained of doing at fixed times in the monastery. But the demon does not allow him to keep the regularprayers or norms of fasting or orders of vigil. Having bound him fast in the madness of avarice, he persuades him todevote all his effort to his handicraft.

There are three forms of this sickness, all of which are equally condemned by the Holy Scriptures and the teachingof the Fathers. The first induces those who were poor to acquire and save the goods they lacked in the world. Thesecond compels those who have renounced worldly goods by offering them to God, to have regrets and to seek afterthem again. A third infects a monk from the start with lack of faith and ardor, so preventing his complete detach-ment from worldly things, producing in him a fear of poverty and distrust in God's providence and leading him tobreak the promises he made when he renounced the world.

Examples of these three forms of avarice are, as I have said, condemned in Holy Scripture. Gehazi wanted toacquire property which he did not previously possess, and therefore never received the prophetic grace which histeacher had wished to leave him in the place of an inheritance. Because of the prophet's curse he inherited incurableleprosy instead of a blessing (cf. 2 Kgs. 5:27). And Judas, who wished to acquire money which he had previouslyabandoned on following Christ, not only lapsed so far as to betray the Master and lose his place in the circle of theapostles; he also put an end to his life in the flesh through a violent death (cf. Matt. 27:5). Thirdly, Ananias andSapphira were condemned to death

by the Apostle's word when they kept back something of what they had acquired(cf. Acts 5:1-10). Again, in Deuteronomy Moses is indirectly exhorting those who promise to renounce the world,and who then retain their earthly possessions because of the fear that comes from lack of faith, when he says: 'What

man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? He shall not go out to do battle; let him return to his house, lest hisbrethren's heart faint as well as his heart' (of. Deut. 20:8). Could anything be clearer or more certain than thistestimony? Should not we who have left the world learn from these examples to renounce it completely and in thisstate go forth to do battle? We should not turn others from the perfection taught in the Gospels and make themcowardly because of our own hesitant and feeble start.

Some, impelled by their own deceit and avarice, distort the[VI] 81

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meaning of the scriptural statement, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive' (Acts 20:35). They do the same withthe Lord's words when He says, 'If you want to be perfect, go and sell all you have and give to the poor, and you willhave treasure in heaven; and come and follow Me' (Matt. 19:21). They judge that it is more blessed to have controlover one's personal wealth, and to give from this to those in need, than to possess nothing at all. They should know,however, that they have not yet renounced the world or achieved monastic perfection so long as they are ashamed toaccept for Christ's sake the poverty of the Apostle and to provide for themselves and the needy through the labor oftheir hands (cf Acts 20:34); for only in this way will they fulfill the .monastic profession and be glorified with theApostle. Having distributed their former wealth, let them fight the good fight with Paul 'in hunger and thirst ... incold and nakedness' (2 Cor. 11:27). Had the Apostle thought that the possession of one's former wealth was morenecessary for perfection, he would not have despised his official status as a Roman citizen (cf. Acts 22:25). Norwould those in Jerusalem have sold their houses and fields and given the money they got from them to the apostles(cf. Acts 4: 34-35), had they felt that the apostles considered it more blessed to live off one's own possessions thanfrom one's labor and the offerings of the Gentiles.

The Apostle gives us a clear lesson in this matter when he writes to the Romans in the passage beginning, 'Butnow I go to Jerusalem to minister to the saints', and ending: 'They were pleased to do it, and indeed they are in debtto them' (Rom. 15:25-27). He himself was often in chains, in prison or on fatiguing travel, and so was usuallyprevented from providing for himself with his own hands. He tells us that he accepted the necessities of life from thebrethren who came to him from Macedonia (cf. 2 Cor. 11:9); and writing to the Philippians he says: 'Now youPhilippians know also that . . . when I deparfed from Macedonia no church except you helped me with gifts ofmoney. For even in Thessalonica you sent me help, not once but twice' (Phil. 4:15-16). Are, then, the avariciousright and are these men more blessed than the Apostle himself, because they satisfied his wants from their ownresources? Surely no one would be so foolish as to say this.

If we want to follow the gospel commandment and the practice of the whole Church as it was founded initiallyupon the apostles.

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we should not follow our own notions or give wrong meanings to things rightly said. We must discard faint-hearted,faithless opinion and recover the strictness of the Gospel; In this way we shall be able to follow also in the footstepsof the Fathers, adhering to the discipline of the cenobitic life and truly renouncing this world.

It is good here to recall the words of St Basil, Bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. He is reported once to have saidto a senator, who had renounced the world in a half-hearted manner and was keeping back some of his personalfortune: 'You have lost the senator and failed to make a monk.' We should therefore make every effort to cut outfrom our souls this root of all evils, avarice, in the certain knowledge that if the root remains the branches will sproutfreely.

This uprooting is difficult to achieve unless we are living in a monastery, for in a monastery we cease to worryabout even our most basic needs. With the fate of Ananias and Sapphira in mind, we should shudder at the thoughtof keeping to ourselves anything of our former possessions. Similarly, frightened by the

example of Gehazi who wasafflicted with incurable leprosy because of his avarice, let us guard against piling up money which we did not havewhile in the world. Finally, recalling Judas' death by hanging, let us beware of acquiring again any of the thingswhich we have already renounced. In all this we should remember how uncertain is the hour of our death, so that ourLord does not come unexpectedly and, finding our conscience soiled with avarice, say to us what God says to therich man in the Gospel: 'You fool, this night your soul will be required of you: who then will be the owner of whatyou have stored up?' (Luke 12: 20).

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Our fourth struggle is against the demon of anger. We must, with God's help, eradicate his deadly poison from thedepths of our souls. So long as he dwells in our hearts and blinds the eyes of the heart with his somber disorders, wecan neither discriminate what is for our good, nor achieve spiritual knowledge, nor fulfill our good intentions, norparticipate in true life: and our intellect will remain impervious to the contemplation of the true, divine light; for it iswritten, 'For my eye is troubled because of anger' (Ps. 6:7. LXX).

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Nor will we share in divine wisdom even though We are deemed wise by all men, for it is written: 'Anger lodgesin the bosom of fools' (Eccles. 7:9). Nor can we discriminate in decisions affecting our salvation even though we arethought by our fellow men to have good sense, for it is written: 'Anger destroys even men of good sense' (Prov. 15:1.LXX). Nor will we be able to keep our lives in righteousness with a watchful heart, for it is written; 'Man's angerdoes not bring about the righteousness of God' (]as. i: 20). Nor will we be able to acquire the decorum and dignitypraised by all, for it is written: 'An angry man is not dignified' (Prov. 11: 25. LXX).

If, therefore, you desire to attain perfection and rightly to pursue the spiritual way, you should make yourself astranger to all sinful anger and wrath. Listen to

what St Paul enjoins: 'Rid yourselves of all bitterness, wrath, anger,clamor, evil speaking and all malice' (Eph. 4:31). In saying 'all' he leaves no excuse for regarding any anger asnecessary or reasonable. If you want to correct your brother when he is doing wrong or to punish him, you must tryto keep yourself calm; otherwise you yourself may catch the sickness you are seeking to cure and you may find thatthe words of the Gospel now apply to you: 'Physician, heal yourself (Luke 4:23), or 'Why do you look at the speckof dust in your brother's eye, and not notice the rafter in your own eye?' (Matt. 7:3).

No matter what provokes it, anger blinds the soul's eyes, preventing it from seeing the Sun of righteousness.Leaves, whether of gold or lead, placed over the eyes, obstruct the sight equally, for the value of the gold does notaffect the blindness it produces. Similarly, anger, whether reasonable or unreasonable, obstructs our spiritual vision.Our mcensive power can be Used in a way that is according to nature only when turned against our ownimpassioned or self-indulgent thoughts. This is what the Prophet teaches us when he says: 'Be angry, and do not sin'(Ps. 4:4. LXX) - that is, be angry with your own passions and with your malicious thoughts, and do not sin bycarrying out their suggestions. What follows clearly confirms this interpretation: 'As you lie in bed, repent of whatyou say in your heart' (Ps. 4:4. LXX) - that is, when malicious thoughts enter your heart, expel them with anger, andthen turn to compunction and repentance as if your soul were resting in a bed of stillness.

St Paul agrees with this when he cites this passage and then adds:

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'Do not let the sun go down upon your anger: and do not make room for the devil' (Eph. 4: 26-27), by which hemeans: 'Do not make Christ, the Sun of righteousness, set in your hearts by angering him through your assent to evilthoughts, thereby allowing the devil to find room in you because of Christ's departure.' God has spoken of this Sunin the words of His prophet: 'But upon you that fear My name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing inHis wings' (Mai. 4:2). If we take Paul's saying literally, it does not permit us to keep our anger even until sunset.What then shall we say about those who, because of

the harshness and fury of their impassioned state, not onlymaintain their anger until the setting of this day's sun, but prolong it for many days? Or about others who do notexpress their anger, but keep silent and increase the poison of their rancor to their own destraction? They areunaware that we must avoid anger not only in what we do but also in our thoughts: otherwise our intellect will bedarkened by our rancor, cut off from the light of spiritual knowledge and discrimination, and deprived of theindwelling of the Holy Spirit.

It is for this reason that the Lord commands us to leave our offering before the altar and be reconciled with ourbrother (cf Matt, s: 23-24), since our offering will not be acceptable so long as anger and rancor are bottled upwithin us. The Apostle teaches us the same thing when he tells us to 'pray without ceasing' (1 Thess. 5:17), and to'pray every where, lifting up holy hands without anger and without quarrelling' (1 Tim. 2:8). We are thus left withthe choice either of never praying, and so of disobeying the Apostle's commandment, or of trying earnestly to fulfillhis commandment by praying without anger or rancor.

We are often indifferent to our brethren who are distressed or upset, on the grounds that they are in this statethrough no fault of ours. The Doctor of souls, however, wishing to root out the soul's excuses from the heart, tells usto leave our gift and to be reconciled not only if we happen to be upset by our brother, but also if he is upset by us,whether justly or unjustly: only when we have healed the breach through our apology should we offer our gift.

We may find the same teaching in the Old Testament as well. As though in complete agreement with the Gospels,it says: 'Do not hate your brother in your heart' (Lev. 19:17); and: "The way of the rancorous leads to death' (Prov.12: 28. LXX). These passages,

then, not only forbid anger in what we do but also angry thought. If therefore we are to follow the divine laws, wemust struggle with all our strength against the demon of anger and against the sickness which lies hidden within us.When we are angry with others we should not seek solitude on the grounds that there, at least, no one will provokeus to anger, and that in solitude the virtue of long-

suffering can easily be acquired. Our desire to leave our brethrenis because of our pride, and because we do not wish to blame ourselves and ascribe to our own laxity the cause ofour unniliness. So long as we assign the causes for our weaknesses to others, we cannot attain perfection in long-suffering.

Self-reform and peace are not achieved through the patience which others show us, but through our own long-suffering towards our neighbor. When we try to escape the struggle for long-suffering by retreating into solitude,those unhealed passions we take there with us are merely hidden, not erased: for unless our passions are first purged,solitude and withdrawal from the world not only foster them but also keep them concealed, no longer allowing us toperceive what passion it is that enslaves us. On the contrary, they impose on us an illusion of virtue and persuade usto believe that we have achieved long-suffering and humility, because there is no one present to provoke and test us.But as soon as something happens which does arouse and challenge us, our hidden and previously unnoticedpassions immediately break out like uncontrolled horses that have long been kept unexercised and idle, draggingtheir driver all the more violently and wildly to destruction. Our passions grow fiercer when left idle through lack ofcontact with other people. Even that shadow of patience and long-suffering which we thought we possessed whilewe mixed with our brethren is lost in our isolation through not being exercised. Poisonous creatures that live quietlyin their lairs in the desert display their fury only when they detect someone approaching, and likewise passion-filledmen, who live quietly not because of their virtuous disposition but because of their solitude, spit forth their venomwhenever someone approaches and provokes them. This is why those seeking perfect gentleness must make everyeffort to avoid anger not only towards men, but also towards animals and even inanimate objects.

I can remember how, when I lived in the desert, I became angry with the rushes because they were either too thickor too thin; or

with a piece of wood, when I wished to cut it quickly and could not; or with a flint, when I was in a hurry to light afire and the spark would not come. So all-

embracing was my anger that it was aroused even against inanimateobjects.

If then we wish to receive the Lord's blessing we should restrain not only the outward expression of anger, butalso angry thoughts. More beneficial than controlling our tongue m a moment of anger and refraining from angry

words is purifying our heart from rancor and not harboring mahcious thoughts against our brethren. The Gospelteaches us to cut off the roots of our sins and not merely their fruits. When we have dug the root of anger out of ourheart, we will no longer act with hatred or envy. 'Whoever hates his brother is a murderer' (1 John 3:15), for he killshim with the hatred in his mind. The blood of a man who has been slain by the sword can be seen by men, but bloodshed by the hatred in the mind is seen by God, who rewards each man with punishment or a crown not only for hisacts but for his thoughts and intentions as well. As God Himself says through the Prophet: 'Behold, I am coming toreward them according to their actions and their thoughts' (cf Ecclus. 35:19); and the Apostle says: 'And theirthoughts accuse or else excuse them in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men' (Rom. 2:15-16). The LordHimself teaches us to put aside all anger when He says: 'Whoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger ofjudgment' (Matt. 5:22). This is the text of the best manuscripts; for it is clear from the purpose of Scripture in thiscontext that the words 'without a cause' were added later. The Lord's intention is that we should remove the root ofanger, its spark, so to speak, in whatever way we can, and not keep even a single pretext for anger in our hearts.Otherwise we will be stirred to anger initially for what appears to be a good reason and then find that our mcensivepower is totally out of control.

The final cure for this sickness is to realize that we must not become angry for any reason whatsoever, whetherjust or unjust. When the demon of anger has darkened our mind, we are left with neither the light of discrimination,nor the assurance of true judgment, nor the guidance of righteousness, and our soul cannot become the temple of theHoly Spirit. Finally, we should always bear in mind our ignorance of the time of our death, keeping ourselves fromanger and recognizing that neither self-restraint nor the

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renunciation of all material things, nor fasting and vigils, are of any benefit if we are found guilty at the lastjudgment because we are the slaves of anger and hatred.

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On the Eight VicesOn Dejection

Our fifth struggle is against the demon of dejection, who obscures the soul's capacity for spiritual contemplationand keeps it from all good works. When this malicious demon seizes our soul and darkens it completely, he preventsus from praying gladly, from reading Holy Scripture with profit and perseverance, and from being gentle andcompassionate towards our brethren. He instills a hatred of every kind of work and even of the monastic professionitself. Undermining all the soul's salutary resolutions, weakening its persistence and constancy, he leaves it senselessand paralyzed, tied and bound by its despairing thoughts.

If our purpose is to fight the spiritual fight and to defeat, with God's help, the demons of malice, we should takeevery care to guard our heart from the demon of dejection, just as a moth devours clothing and a worm devourswood, so dejection devours a man's soul. It persuades him to shun every helpful encounter and stops him acceptingadvice from his true friends or giving them a courteous and peaceful reply. Seizing the entire soul, it fills it withbitterness and listlessness. Then it suggests to the soul that we should go away from other people, since they are the

cause of its agitation. It does not allow the soul to understand that its sickness does not come from without, but lieshidden within, only manifesting itself when temptations attack the soul because of our ascetic efforts.

A man can be harmed by another only through the causes of the passions which lie within himself. It is for thisreason that God, the Creator of all and the Doctor of men's souls, who alone has accurate knowledge of the soul'swounds, does not tell us to forsake the company of men: He tells us to root out the causes of evil within us and torecognize that the soul's health is achieved not by a man's separating himself from his fellows, but by his living theascetic life in the company of holy men. When we abandon our brothers for some apparently good reason, we do noteradicate the motives for

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dejection but merely exchange them, since the sickness which lies hidden within us will show itself again in othercircumstances.

Thus it is clear that our whole fight is against the passions within. Once these have been extirpated from our heartby the grace and help of God, we will readily be able to live not simply with other men, but even with wild beasts,job confirms this when he says:

'And the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you' (Job 5:23). But first we must struggle with the demon ofdejection who casts the soul into despair. We must drive him from our heart. It was this demon that did not allowCain to repent after he had killed his brother, or Judas after he had betrayed his Master. The only form of dejectionwe should cultivate is the sorrow which goes with repentance for sin and is accompanied by hope in God. It was ofthis form of dejection that the Apostle said: 'Godly sorrow produces a saving repentance which is not to be repentedof (2 Cor. 7:10). This 'godly sorrow' nourishes the soul through the hope engendered by repentance, and it ismingled with joy. That is why it makes us obedient and eager for every good work: accessible, humble, gentle,forbearing and patient in enduring all the suffering or tribulation God may send us. Possession of these qualitiesshows that a man enjoys the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace, long-suffering, goodness, faith, self-control(cf. Gal. 5:11). But from the other kind of dejection we come to know the fruits of the evil spirit: listlessness,impatience, anger, hatred, contentiousness, despair, sluggishness in praying. So we should shun this second form ofdejection as we would unchastity, avarice, anger and the rest of the passions. It can be healed by prayer, hope inGod, meditation on Holy Scripture, and by living with godly people.

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On the Eight VicesOn Listlessness

Our sixth struggle is against the demon of listlessness, who works hand in hand with the demon of dejection. Thisis a harsh, terrible demon, always attacking the

monk, falling upon him at the sixth hour (mid-day), making himslack and fall of fear, inspiring him with hatred for his monastery, his fellow monks, for work of any kind, and evenfor the reading of Holy Scripture. He suggests to the monk that he should go elsewhere and that, if he does not, allhis effort

and time will be wasted. In addition to all this, tie produces in him at around the sixth hour a hunger such as hewould not normally have after fasting for three days, or after a long journey or the heaviest labor. Then he makeshim think that he will not be able to rid himself of this grievous sickness, except by sallying forth frequently to visithis brethren, ostensibly to help them and to tend them if they are unwell. When he cannot lead him astray in thismanner, he puts him into the deepest sleep. In short, his attacks become stronger and more violent, and he cannot bebeaten off except through prayer, through avoiding useless speech, through the study of the Holy Scriptures andthrough patience in the face of temptation. If he finds a monk unprotected by these weapons, he strikes him downwith his arrows, making him a wayward and lazy wanderer, who roams idly from monastery to monastery, thinkingonly of where he can get something to eat and drink. The mind of someone affected by listlessness is filled withnothing but vain distraction. Finally he is ensnared in worldly things and gradually becomes so grievously caught upin them that he abandons the monastic life altogether.

The Apostle, who knows that this sickness is indeed serious, and wishes to eradicate it from our soul, indicates itsmain causes and says: 'Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to withdrawyourselves from every brother who lives in an unruly manner and not according to the tradition which you havereceived from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us: for we ourselves did not behave in anunruly manner when among you, nor did we eat any man's bread as a free gift; but we toiled strenuously night andday so that we might not be a burden to any of you: not because we do not have the right, but so as to give you anexample to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you instructions that if anyone refuses to work heshould have nothing to eat. For we hear that there are some among you who live in an

unruly manner, not working atall, but simply being busybodies. Now we instruct such people and exhort them by our Lord Jesus Christ to workquietly and to eat their own bread' (2 Thess.3:6-12). We should note how clearly the Apostle describes the causes oflistlessness. Those who do not work he calls unruly, expressing a multiplicity of faults in this one word. For theunruly man, is lacking in reverence, impulsive in speech, quick, to abuse, and so

unfit for stillness. He is a slave to listlessness. Paul therefore tells us to avoid such a person, that is, to isolateourselves from him as from a plague. With the words 'and not according to the tradition which you have receivedfrom us he makes it clear that they are arrogant and that they destroy the apostolic traditions. Again he says: 'nor didwe eat any man's bread as a free gift; but we toiled strenuously night and day'. The teacher of the nations, the heraldof the Gospel, who was raised to the third heaven, who says that the Lord ordained that 'those who preach theGospel should live by the Gospel' (ICor. 9:14) - this same man works night and day 'so that we might not be aburden to any of you'. What then can be said of us, who are listless about our work and physically lazy - we whohave not been entrusted with the proclamation of the Gospel or the care of the churches, but merely with lookingafter our own soul? Next Paul shows more clearly the harm bom of laziness by adding: 'not working at all, butsimply being busybodies'; for from laziness comes inquisitiveness, and from inquisitiveness, unruliness, and fromunruliness, every kind of evil. He provides a remedy, however, with the words: 'Now we instruct such people ... to

work quietly and to eat their own bread ' But with even greater emphasis, he says: 'if anyone refuses to work, heshould have nothing to eat'.

The holy fathers of Egypt, who were brought up on the basis of these apostolic commandments, do not allowmonks to be without work at any time, especially while they are young. They know that by persevering in workmonks dispel listlessness, provide for their own sustenance and help those who are in need. They not only work fortheir own requirements, but from their labor they also

minister to their guests, to the poor and to those in prison,believing that such charity is a holy sacrifice acceptable to God. The fathers also say that as a rule someone whoworks is attacked and afflicted by but a single demon, while someone who does not work is taken prisoner by athousand evil spirits.

It is also good to recall what Abba Moses, one of the most experienced of the fathers, told me. I had not beenliving long in the desert when I was troubled by listlessness. So I went to him and said: 'Yesterday I was greatlytroubled and weakened by listlessness, and I was not able to free myself from it until I went to see Abba Paul' AbbaMoses replied to me by saying: 'So far from freeing yourself from it, you have surrendered to it completely andbecome its slave.

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You must realize that it will attack all the more severely because you have deserted your post, unless from now onyou strive to subdue it through patience, prayer and manual labor.'

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On the Eight Vices

On Self-Esteem

Our seventh struggle is against the demon of self-esteem, a multiform and subtle passion which is not readilyperceived even by the person whom it tempts. The provocations of the other passions are more apparent and it istherefore somewhat easier to do battle with them, for the soul recognizes its enemy and can repulse him at once byrebutting him and by prayer. The vice of self-esteem, however, is difficult to fight against, because it has manyforms and appears in all our activities - in our way of speaking, in what we say and in our silences, at work, in vigilsand fasts, in prayer and reading, in stillness and long-suffering. Through all these it seeks to strike down the soldierof Christ. When it cannot seduce a man with extravagant clothes, it tries to tempt him by means of shabby ones.When it cannot flatter him with honor, it inflates him by causing him to endure what seems to be dishonor. When itcannot persuade him to feel proud of

his display of eloquence, it entices him through silence into thinking he hasachieved stillness. When it cannot puff him up with the thought of his luxurious table, it lures him into fasting forthe sake of praise.

In short, every task, every activity, gives this malicious demon a chance for battle. He even prompts us to imagmewe are priests. I remember a certain elder who, while I was staying in Sketis, went to visit a brother in his cell. Whenhe approached his door, he heard him speaking inside: thinking that he was studying the Scriptures, he stood outsidelistening, only to realize that self-esteem had driven the man out of his mind and that he was ordaining himselfdeacon and dismissing the catechumens. When the elder heard this, he pushed open the door and went in. The

brother came to greet him, bowed as is the custom, and asked him if he had been standing at the door for a longtime. The elder replied with a smile: 'I arrived a moment ago, just when you were finishing the dismissal of thecatechumens/ When the brother heard this, he fell at the feet of the elder and begged him to pray for him so that hewould be freed from

this delusion. I have recalled this incident because I want to show to what depths of stupidity this demon can bringus.

The person who wants to engage fully in spiritual combat and to win the crown of righteousness must try by everymeans to overcome this beast that assumes such varied forms. He should always keep in mind the words of David:'The Lord has scattered the bones of those who please men' (Ps. 53:5. LXX). He should not do anything with a viewto being praised by other people, but should seek God's reward only, always rejecting the thoughts of self-praise thatenter his heart, and always regarding himself as nothing before God. In this way he will be freed, with God's help,from the demon of self-esteem.

Our eighth struggle is against the demon of pride, a most sinister demon, fiercer than all that have been discussedup till now. He attacks the perfect above all and seeks to destroy those who have mounted almost to the heights ofholiness. Just as a deadly plague destroys not just one member of the body, but the whole of it, so pride comipts thewhole soul, not just part of it. Each of the other passions that trouble the soul attacks and tries to overcome the singlevirtue which is opposed to it, and so it darkens and troubles the soul only partially. But the passion of pride darkensthe soul completely and leads to its utter downfall.

In order to understand more fully what is meant by this, we should look at the problem in the following way.Gluttony tries to destroy self-control; unchastity, moderation; avarice, voluntary poverty; anger, gentleness; and theother forms of vice, their corresponding virtues. But when the vice of pride has become master of our wretched soul,it acts like some harsh tyrant who has gained control of a great city, and destroys it completely, razing it to itsfoundations. The angel who fell from heaven because of his pride bears witness to this. He had been created by Godand adorned with every virtue and all wisdom, but he did not want to ascribe this to the grace of the Lord. Heascribed it to his own nature and as a result regarded himself as equal to God. The prophet rebukes this claim whenhe says: 'You have said in your heart: "I will sit on a high mountain; I will place my throne upon the clouds and Iwill be like the Most

High." Yet you are a man, and not God' (cf Isa. 14:13-14). And again, another prophet says, 'Why do you boast ofyour wickedness, 0 mighty man?' and he continues in this same vein (Ps. 52:1). Since we are aware of this weshould feel fear and guard our hearts with extreme care from the deadly spirit of pride. When we have attained somedegree of holiness we should always repeat to ourselves the words of the Apostle: "Yet not 1, but the grace of Godwhich was with me' (1 Cor. 15:10), as well as what was said by the Lord:

'Without Me you can do nothing' (John 15:5). We should also bear in mind what the prophet said: 'Unless theLord builds the house, they labor in vain that build

it' (Ps. 127:1), and finally: 'It does not depend on-man's will oreffort, but on God's mercy' (Rom. 9:16).

Even if someone is sedulous, serious and resolute, he cannot, so long as he is bound to flesh and blood, approachperfection except through the mercy and grace of Christ. James himself says that 'every good gift is from above' Jas.1:17), while the Apostle Paul asks: 'What do you have which you did not receive? Now if you received it, why doyou boast, as if you had not received it?' (1 Cor. 4:7). What right, then, has man to be proud as though he couldachieve perfection through his own efforts ?

The thief who received the kingdom of heaven, though not as the reward of virtue, is a true witness to the fact thatsalvation is ours through the grace and mercy of God. All of our holy fathers knew this and all with one accord teachthat perfection in holiness can be achieved only through humility. Humility, in its turn, can be achieved only throughfaith, fear of God, gentleness and the shedding of all possessions. It is by means of these that we attain perfect love,through the grace and compassion of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom be glory through all the ages. Amen.

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On the Holy Fathers of SketisAnd on Discrimination

Written for Abba Leontios

The promise 1 made to the blessed Bishop Kastor to give an account of the way of life and the teaching of the holyfathers has been fulfilled in part by the writings 1 sent him entitled 'On Coenobitic Institutions' and 'On the EightVices', and 1 now propose to fulfill it completely. But having heard that Bishop Kastor has left us to dwell withChrist, 1 felt 1 should send the remaining portion of my treatise to you, most holy Leontios, who have inherited bothhis virtuous qualities and the guardianship, with God's help, of his monastery.

1 and my spiritual friend, the holy Gemianos, whom 1 had known since my youth at school, in the army and inmonastic life, were staying in the desert of Sketis, the centre of the most experienced monks. It was there that wesaw Abba Moses, a saintly man, outstanding not only in the practice of the virtues but in

spiritual contemplation aswell. We begged him with tears, therefore, to tell us how we might approach perfection.

After much entreaty on our part, he said; 'Children, all virtues and all pursuits have a certain immediate purpose;and those who look to this purpose and adapt themselves accordingly will reach the ultimate goal to which theyaspire. The fanner willingly works the earth, enduring now the sun's heat and now the winter's cold, his immediatepurpose being to clear it of thorns and weeds, while his ultimate goal is the enjoyment of its fruits. The merchant,ignoring dangers on land and sea, willingly gives himself to his business with the purpose of making a profit, while

his goal is enjoyment of this profit. The soldier, too, ignores the dangers of war and the miseries of service abroad.His purpose is to gain a higher rank by using his ability and skill, while his goal is to enjoy the advantages of thisrank.

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'Now our profession also has its own immediate purpose and its own ultimate goal, for the sake of which wewillingly endure all manner of toil and suffering. Because of this, fasts do not cast us down, the hardship of vigilsdelights us: the reading and study of Scripture are readily undertaken; and physical work, obedience, strippingoneself of everything earthly, and the life here in this desert are carried out with pleasure.

'You have given up your country, your families, everything worldly in order to embrace a life in a foreign landamong rude and uncultured people like us. Tell me, what was your purpose and what goal did you set beforeyourselves in doing all this?'

We replied: 'We did it for the kingdom of heaven.' In response Abba Moses said: 'As for the goal, you haveanswered well: but what is the purpose which we set before us and which we pursue unwaveringly so as to reach thekingdom of heaven? This you have not told me.'

When we confessed that we did not know, the old man replied: 'The goal of our profession, as we have said, is thekingdom of God. Its immediate purpose, however, is purity of heart, for without this we cannot reach our goal. Weshould therefore always have this purpose in mind: and, should it ever happen that for a short time our heart turnsaside from the direct path, we must bring it back again" at once, guiding our lives with reference to our purpose as ifit were a carpenter's rule.

'The Apostle Paul knew this when he said: "Forgetting what lies behind, and reaching forward to what lies infront, I pursue my purpose, aiming at the prize of the high calling of God" (Phil. 3:13-14). We, too, do everythingfor the sake of this immediate purpose. We give up country, family, possessions and everything worldly in order toacquire purity of heart. If we forget this purpose we cannot avoid frequently stumbling and losing our way, for wewill be walking in the dark and straying from the proper path. This has happened to many men who at the start oftheir ascetic life gave up all wealth, possessions and everything worldly, but who later flew into a rage over a fork, aneedle, a rush or a book. This would not have happened to them had they borne in mind the purpose for which theygave up everything. It is for the love of our neighbor that we scorn wealth, lest by fighting over it and stimulatingour disposition to anger, we fall away from love. When we show this

disposition to anger towards our brother even in small things, we have lapsed from our purpose and our renunciationof the world is useless. The blessed Apostle was aware of this and said: "Though I give my body to be burned, andhave no love, it profits me nothing" (1 Cor. 13:3). From this we learn that perfection does not follow immediatelyupon renunciation and withdrawal from the world. It comes after the attainment of love which, as the Apostle said,"is not jealous or puffed up, does not grow angry, bears no grudge, is not arrogant, thinks no evil" (cf. 1 Cor. 13:4-5). All these things establish purity of heart; and it is for this that we should do everything, scorning possessions,enduring fasts

and vigils gladly, engaging in spiritual reading and psalmody. If, however, some necessary taskpleasing to God should keep us from our normal fasting and reading, we should not on this account neglect purity ofheart. For what we gain by fasting is not so great as the damage done by anger: nor is the profit from reading asgreat as the harm done when we scorn or grieve a brother.

'Fasts and vigils, the study of Scripture, renouncing possessions and everything worldly are not in themselvesperfection, as we have said; they are its tools. For perfection is not to be found in them; it is acquired through them.It is useless, therefore, to boast of our fasting, vigils, poverty, and reading of Scripture when we have not achievedthe love of God and our fellow men. Whoever has achieved love has God within himself and his intellect is alwayswith God.'

To this Germanos rejoined: 'What man, while in the flesh, can so fix his intellect on God that he thmks of nothingelse, not even of visiting the sick, of entertaining guests, of his handicraft, or of the other unavoidable bodily needs?Above all, since God is invisible and incomprehensible, how can a man's mind always look upon Him and beinseparable from Him?'

Abba Moses replied: 'To look upon God at all times and to be inseparable from Him, in the manner which youenvisage, is impossible for a man still in the flesh and enslaved to weakness. In another way, however, it is possibleto look upon God, for the manner of contemplating God may be conceived and understood in many ways. God is notonly to be known in His blessed and incomprehensible being, for this is something which is reserved for His saintsin the age to come. He is also to be known from the grandeur

and beauty of His creatures, from His providence which governs the world day by day, from His righteousness andfrom the wonders which He shows to His saints in each generation. When we reflect on the measurelessness of Hispower and His unsleeping eye which looks upon the hidden things of the heart and which nothing can escape, we arefilled with the deepest awe, marveling at Him

and adoring Him. When we consider that He numbers the raindrops,the sand of the sea and the stars of heaven, we are amazed at the grandeur of His nature and His wisdom. When wethink of His ineffable and inexplicable wisdom. His love for mankind, and His limitless long-suffering at man'sinnumerable sins, we glorify Him. When we consider His great love for us, in that though we had done nothing goodHe, being God, deigned to become man in order to save us from delusion, we are roused to longing for Him. Whenwe reflect that He Himself has vanquished in us our adversary, the devil, and that He has given us eternal life if only

we would choose and turn towards His goodness, then we venerate Him. There are many similar ways of seeing andapprehending God, which grow in us according to our labor and to the degree of our purification/

Germanos then asked: 'How does it happen that even against our will many ideas and wicked thoughts trouble us,entering by stealth and undetected to steal our attention? Not only are we unable to prevent them from entering, butit is extremely difficult even to recognize them. Is it possible for the mind to be completely free of them and not betroubled by them at all?'

Abba Moses replied: 'It is impossible for the mind not to be troubled by these thoughts. But if we exert ourselvesit is withm our power either to accept them and give them our attention, or to expel them. Their coming is not withinour power to control, but their expulsion is. The amending of our mind is also within the power of our choice andeffort. When we meditate wisely and: continually on the law of God, study psalms and canticles, engage-in fastingand vigils, and always bear in mind what is to come - the kingdom of heaven, the Gehenna of fire and all God'sworks — our wicked thoughts diminish and find no place. But when we devote our time to worldly concerns and tomatters of the flesh, to pointless and useless conversation, then these base thoughts multiply in us. just as it isimpossible to stop a watermill from turning, although

the miller has power to choose between grinding either wheat or tares, so it is impossible to stop our mind, which isever-moving, from having thoughts, although it is within our power to feed it either with spiritual meditation or withworldly concerns.'

When the old man saw us marveling at this and still longing to hear more, he was silent for a short while and thensaid: 'Your longing has made me speak at length, and yet you are still eager for more, and from this I see that youare truly thirsty to be taught about perfection. So I would like to talk to you about the special virtue ofdiscrimination. This is a kind of acropolis or queen among the virtues; and I will show you its excellence and value,not only in my own words, but also through the venerable teachings of the fathers; for the Lord fills His teacherswith grace according to the quality and longing of those who listen.

'Discrimination, then, is no small virtue, but one of the most important gifts of the Holy Spirit. Concerning thesegifts the Apostle says: "To one is given by the Spirit the principle of wisdom; to another the principle of spiritualknowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing... to anotherdiscrimination of spirits' (ICor. 12:8-10). Then, having completed his catalogue of spiritual gifts, he adds: "But allthese are energized by the one and selfsame Spirit" (1 Cor. 12:11). You can see, therefore, that the gift ofdiscrimination is nothing worldly or insignificant. It is the greatest gift of God's grace. A monk must seek this giftwith all his strength and diligence, and acquire the ability to discriminate between the spirits that enter him and toassess them accurately. Otherwise he will not only fall into the foulest pits of wickedness as he wanders about in thedark, but even stumble when his path is smooth and straight.

'I remember how in my youth, when I was in the Thebaid, where the blessed Antony used to live, some elderscame to see him, to enquire with him into the question of perfection in virtue. They asked him; "Which is thegreatest of all virtues - we mean the virtue capable of keeping a monk from being harmed by the nets of the devil

and his deceit?" Each one then gave his opinion according to his understanding. Some said that fasting and thekeeping of vigils make it easier to come near to God, because these refine and purify the mind. Others said thatvoluntary poverty and detachment from personal possessions make it easier, since through these the mind is

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released from the intricate threads of worldly care. Others judged acts of compassion to be the most important, sincein the Gospel the Lord says: "Come, you whom my Father has blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you fromthe foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave Me food" and so on (Matt. 25: 34-36). The best part ofthe night was passed in this manner, taken up with a discussion in which each expressed his opinion as to whichvirtue makes it easiest for a man to come near to God.

'Last of all the blessed Antony gave his reply: "All that you have said is both necessary and helpful for those whoare searching for God and wish to come to Him. But we cannot award the first place to any of these virtues; for thereare many among us who have endured fasting and vigils, or have withdrawn into the desert, or have practicedpoverty to such an extent that they have not left themselves enough for their daily sustenance, or have performedacts of compassion so generously that they no longer have anything to give; and yet these same monks, having doneall this, have nevertheless fallen away miserably from virtue and slipped into vice.

' "What was it, then, that made them stray from the straight path? In my opinion it was simply that they did notpossess the grace of discrimination; for it is this virtue that teaches a man to walk along the royal road, swervingneither to the right through immoderate self-control, nor to the left through indifference and laxity. Discrimination isa kind of eye and lantern of the soul, as is said in the gospel passage: "The light of the body is the eye; if thereforeyour eye is pure, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full ofdarkness' (Matt. 6:22-3). And this is just what we find; for the power of discrimination, scrutinizing all the thoughtsand actions of a man, distinguishes and sets aside everything that is base and not pleasing to God, and keeps himfree from delusion.

' "We can see this in what is said in the Holy Scriptures. Saul, the first to be entrusted with the kingship of Israel,did not have the eye of discrimination; so

his mind was darkened and he was unable to perceive that it was morepleasing to God that he should obey the commandment of Samuel than that he should offer sacrifices. He gaveoffence through the very things with which he thought to serve God, and because of them he was deposed. Thiswould not have happened had he possessed the light of discrimination (cf 1 Sam. 13: 8-9).

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' "The Apostle calls this virtue 'the sun', as we can see from his saying: 'Do not let the sun go down upon youranger' (Eph. 4:26). It is also called 'the guidance' of our lives, as when it is written: "Those who have no guidancefell like leaves' (Prov. 11:14. LXX). Scripture also refers to it as the 'discernment' without which we must donothing- not even drink the spiritual wine that 'makes glad the heart of man' (Ps. 104:15. LXX); for it is said: 'Drinkwith discernment' (Prov. 31:3. LXX): and: 'He that does not do all things with discernment is like a city that isbroken down and without walls' (Prov. 25:28. LXX). Wisdom, intellection and perceptiveness are united indiscrimination: and without these our inner house cannot be built, nor can we gather spiritual wealth; for it iswritten: 'Through wisdom a house is built, through understanding it is established, and through good judgment itsstorehouses will be filled with wealth' (Prov. 24:3-4. LXX). Discrimination is also called the 'solid food' that 'issuitable for those who have their organs of perception trained by practice to discriminate between good and evil'(Heb. 5:14). These passages show very clearly that without the gift of discrimination no virtue can stand or remainfirm to the end, for it is the mother of all the virtues and their guardian."

'This was Antony's statement, and it was approved by the other fathers. But in order to confirm what St Antonysaid by means of fresh examples from our own times, we should recall Abba Hiron and how a few days ago, as weourselves saw, he was thrown down from the height of the ascetic state to the depths of death by the deception of thedevil. We know how he spent some fifty years in the nearby desert, following a life of great severity and the strictestself-control, seeking out and living in parts of the desert wilder than those inhabited by any of

the other monks there.This same man cast all the fathers and brothers of the nearby desert into inconsolable grief because, after so manylabors and struggles, he was deceived by the devil and suffered such a disastrous fall. This would not have happenedto him had he been armed with the virtue of discrimination, which would have taught him to trust, not his ownjudgment, but rather the advice of his fathers and brethren. Following his own judgment he fasted and isolatedhimself to such a degree that he did not even come to church for the Holy Pascha, lest by meeting the fathers andbrethren and feeding with them he

would be obliged to eat lentils or whatever else was brought to the table, thereby appearing to fall short of the targetwhich he had set himself.

'He had already for long been deceived in this way by his own willfulness when, coming upon an angel of Satan,he bowed before him as if he were an angel of light. The angel commanded him to hurl himself, around midnight,into a very deep well so that he might then know by experience, because of his great virtue and ascetic efforts, thathe would never again be subject to any danger. His darkened mind failed to discern who was suggesting this to him,and he hurled himself into the well during the night. Soon afterwards the brethren, discovering what had happened,were only just able to pull him up half dead. He lived for two more days and died on the third, plunging his brethrenand the priest Paphnoutios into great grief. The latter, moved by feelings of compassion and remembering Hiron'snumerous labors and the many years during which he had persevered in the desert, mentioned his name in theoblation for the dead so that he should not be numbered among those who have taken their own lives.

'And what am I to say about those two brethren who hved beyond the desert of the Thebaid, where the blessedAntony once hved? ImpeUed by a thought the real nature of which they could not discern, they decided to go intothe vast, uncultivated inner desert: and they even made up their minds to refuse food offered them by man, and toaccept only what the Lord would give them in a miraculous fashion. Finally they were seen in the distancewandering about the

desert, weak with hunger, by the Mazikes who, though fiercer and wilder than almost all othersavage peoples, now providentially exchanged their natural wildness for humane feelings and went to meet themcarrying loaves of bread. One of the two brethren accepted the bread with joy and thanksgiving, since his power ofdiscrimination had returned and he realized that such wild and fierce men, who normally rejoice at the sight ofblood, would not have felt sympathy with them in their exhaustion and brought them food if God had not movedthem to it. The other, however, refused the food on the grounds that it was offered him by men arid, persisting in hisundiscnmmatmg judgment, he died from the weakness brought on by his hunger.

'Both monks at first showed total lack of judgment and made a

senseless and destructive plan. One of them, however, when his power of discrimination returned, corrected thedecision he had made so recklessly. But the other, persisting in his stupid and. undiscriminating plan, brought uponhimself the death which the Lord had wanted to avert.

'What am I to say about another monk whose name I do not wish to mention because he is still alive? Hefrequently entertained a demon as if he were an angel and received revelations from him, often seeing what lookedlike the light of a lamp in his cell. Later, he was ordered by this demon to offer his son as a sacrifice to God - his sonwas staying with him in the monastery - on the grounds that he would as a result be deemed worthy of the honoraccorded to the patriarch Abraham. He was so led astray by the demon's advice that he would have carried out thesacrifice of his son, had the latter not seen him, contrary to his normal practice, sharpening a knife and preparing thebonds with which he was going to tie him up like a burnt offering. This enabled the son to make his escape.

'It would take me a long time to give an account of the deception of that Mesopotamian monk who, having showngreat self-control, shutting himself up in his cell for many years and surpassing all monks in those regions inasceticism

and virtue, was then so deluded by demonic dreams and revelations that he reverted to Judaism andcircumcision, in order to deceive him, the devil often showed him dreams that turned out to be true, in this waymaking him more ready to accept his final act of deception. One night he showed him the Christian people with theapostles and martyrs, downcast and filled with shame, wasting away with dejection and grief, while on the other sidehe showed him the Jewish people, with Moses and the prophets, surrounded by light and living in joy and gladness.The deceiver then advised him to be circumcised if he wanted to share in the blessedness and joy of the Jewishpeople. He was deceived and followed this advice. From all this it is clear that none of these people would have beendeluded in this pathetic and miserable fashion had they possessed the gift of discrimination.'

In reply to this Germanos said: 'By means of these recent examples and the statements of the fathers of old, you

have made it clear that discrimination is the source, root, crown and common bond of aU the virtues. But we wouldlike very much to know how we can

acquire it, and how we can recognize the true kind of discrimination which comes from God and distinguish it fromthe false and fictitious kind that comes from the devil.'

Abba Moses then said: 'True discnmination comes to us only as a result of true humility, and this in turn is shownby our revealing to our spiritual fathers not only what we do but also what we think, by never trusting our ownthoughts, and by following in all things the words of our elders, regarding as good what they have judged to be so.In this way not only does the monk remain unharmed through true discrimination and by following the correct path,but he is also kept safe from all the snares of the devil. It is impossible for anyone who orders his life on the basis ofthe judgment and knowledge of the spiritually mature to fall because of the wiles of the demons. In fact, evenbefore someone is granted the

gift of discrimination, the act of revealing his base thoughts openly to the fathersweakens and withers them. For just as a snake which is brought from its dark hole into the light makes every effortto escape and hide itself, so the malicious thoughts that a person brings out into the open by sincere confession seekto depart from him.

'In order to give you a more accurate understanding of this virtue by means of an example, I shall tell you ofsomething that Abba Serapion once did and which he used to speak about to those who came to him for help. Heused to say: "When I was a young man I lived with my spiritual father, and at mealtimes, prompted by the devil, Iwould steal a rusk as I got up from the table and eat it without my father's knowledge. Because I persisted in thishabit, I was utterly overcome by it and was unable to conquer it. Though I was condemned by my own conscience, Iwas ashamed to speak of it to my father. But through God's love it happened that certain brethren came to the oldman for advice and asked him about their thoughts. The elder replied that nothing so harms a monk and brings suchjoy to the demons as the hiding of one's thoughts from one's spiritual father. He also spoke to them about self-control. As this was being said I came to myself and, thinking that God had revealed my past mistakes to the elder, Iwas pricked with compunction and began to cry, throwing from my pocket the rusk which I had stolen as usual.Casting myself to the ground I begged his forgiveness for my past faults and his prayers for my future safety. Thenthe old man said:

'My child, your confession has freed you, although I was silent. You[VI] 104

have slain the demon that was wounding you because of your silence, by expressing openly what you were keepingto yourself. Until this moment you ensured that he would be your master by not opposing or rebuking him. Fromnow on, however, he will no longer find room in you, since he has been brought out of your heart into the open.' Theold man had not finished speaking when the energy of the demon could be seen coming out of my breast like theflame of a lamp. It filled the room with a nasty smell, so dial those present thought that a lump of sulphur wasburning. Then the elder said: 'Look, through

this sign the Lord has borne witness to my words and to yourdeliverance.' Thus, as the result of my confession, the passion of gluttony and the demonic energy left me and Inever again felt any such desire."

'From what Abba Serapion said, we can learn that we shall be granted the gift of true discrimination when wetrust, no longer in the judgments of our own mind, but in the teaching and rule of our fathers. The devil brings themonk to the brink of destruction more effectively through persuading him to disregard the admonitions of the fathersand follow his own judgment and desire, than he does through any other fault. We should learn from examplesprovided by human arts and sciences. If we cannot accomplish anything in them by ourselves - in spite of the factthat they deal with things we can touch with our hands, see with our eyes and hear with our ears - but still needsomeone who will instruct us well and guide us, how can it be anything but foolish to think that the spiritual art, themost difficult of all the arts, has no need of a teacher? It is an invisible, hidden art which is understood only throughpurity of heart, and failure in it brings, not temporary loss, but the soul's destruction and eternal death.'

Gennanos then said: 'Certain fathers who have listened to the thoughts of the brethren have often not only failedto heal them, but have even condemned them and driven them to despair. This has provided us with an excuse forshameful and harmful caution: for we ourselves know of cases of this kind in the region of Syria. A certain brotherrevealed his private thoughts to one of the elders living in those parts, unashamedly laying bare the hidden things ofhis heart with complete simplicity and trath. When the elder heard these things, however, he at once began to beangry with the brother and to attack him, rebuking him for having such base thoughts. As a

result, many who heard of this were ashamed to tell their thoughts to the elders.'

Abba Moses said: 'It is a good thing, as I said, not to hide your thoughts from the fathers. But you should not tellthem to just anyone, you should confess them to

spiritual masters who have discrimination, not simply to thosewhose hair has grown white with age. Many who have looked to age as a guide, and then revealed their thoughts,have not only remained unhealed but have been driven to despair because of the inexperience of those to whom theyconfessed. There was once a very zealous brother who was greatly troubled by the demon of unchastits'. He went toa certain father and confessed his private thoughts to him; but this father, being inexperienced, became angry whenhe heard about them and told the brother that he was contemptible and unworthy of the monastic habit for havingentertained thoughts such as these. When the brother heard this, he lost heart, left his cell and set off back to theworld. Through God's providence, however, Abba Apollos, one of the most experienced of the elders, chanced tomeet him and, seeing him over-wrought and very despondent, asked him why he was in this state. At first thebrother did not reply because he was so depressed but, after the elder had pleaded with him, he told him what was

wrong, saying: "Because I was often troubled by evil thoughts, I went to tell them to the elder: and as he said I haveno hope of salvation, I have given up and am now on my way back to the world."

'When Abba Apollos heard this, he comforted and encouraged him, saying: "Do not be surprised, my child, and donot lose hope. I too, old and grey as I am, am still much troubled by these thoughts. Do not be discouraged by thisburning desire, which is healed not so much by human effort as by God's compassion. Please do this for me: go backto your cell just for today." This the brother did; and Apollos, after leaving him, went to the cell of the elder who hadcaused his despair. Standing outside he implored God with tears and said: "0 Lord, who puts us to the test for ourown benefit, let this elder be given the brother's battle, so that in old age he may leam through experience what hehas not been taught over these many years: how to feel sympathy with those who are under attack by the demons."As he finished his prayer, he saw a dark figure standing near the cell shooting arrows at the elder. Wounded by thearrows.

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St John Cassian

On the Holy Fathers of SketisAnd on Discrimination

Written for Abba Leontios

the elder at once began to stumble back and forth as though drunk. Unable to withstand the attack, he finally left hiscell and set off for the world by the same road that the young monk had taken.

'Seeing what had happened, Abba Apollos confronted him, and asked him where he was going and why he was sotroubled. Although he realized that the holy man knew what was wrong with him, he was too ashamed to sayanything. Abba Apollos then said to him: "Return to your cell, and in the future recognize your own weakness. Thedevil has either not noticed or has despised you, and so not thought you worth fighting. Not that there has been anyquestion of a fight: you could not stand up to his provocation even for a day! This has happened to you because,when you received a younger brother who was being attacked by our common enemy, you drove him to despairinstead of preparing him for battle. You did not recall that wise precept: 'Deliver them that are being led away todeath; and redeem them that are appointed to be slain' (Prov. 24:11. LXX). You did not even remember the parableof our Saviour, which teaches us not to break a bruised reed or quench smoking flax (cf Matt. 12:20). None of uscould endure the plots of the enemy, or allay the fiery turmoil of our nature, if God's grace did not protect our humanweakness. Seeing, then, that God has had this compassion for us, let us pray to Him together and ask Him towithdraw the whip with which He has lashed you. 'For He wounds but binds up; He strikes but His hands heal' (Job5:18). "The Lord kills and gives life; he brings down to the grave and raises again. ... He brings low and lifts up' (1Sam. 2:6-7)." After Abba Apollos had said this and had prayed, the attack which had been launched against the elderwas at once suspended. Finally, Abba Apollos advised him to ask God to give him "the tongue of the learned" so asto know "how to speak a word m season" (Isa. 50:4).

'From all that has been said, we may conclude that nothing leads so surely to salvation as to confess our privatethoughts to those fathers most graced with the power of discrimination, and in our pursuit of holiness to be guidedby them rather than by our own thoughts and judgment. Nor should the fact that we may encounter an elder who issomewhat simple-minded or lacking in experience either prevent us from confessing to the fathers who are trulyqualified, or make us despise our ancestral traditions. Many texts from the divine Scriptures make it clear that thefathers did not say

On the Holy Fathers of SketisAnd on Discrimination

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these things according to their own-hghts, but were inspired by God Himself and by the Scriptures to hand down totheir successors the tradition of asking advice from those who had traveled far along the spiritual path. This is borneout especially by the story of the holy Samuel, who from infancy was dedicated by his mother to God and wasgranted communion with Him. He still did not trust his own thoughts, and in spite of having been called three timesby God, he went to the elder, Eli, and was instructed and guided by him about how he should answer God (cf. 1Sam. 3:9-10). Although God called him personally, none the less He wanted Samuel to receive the guidance anddiscipline of the elder, so that by means of this example we too might be led towards humility.

'When Christ Himself spoke to Paul and called him. He could have opened his eyes at once and made known tohim the way of perfection: instead He sent him to Ananias and told him to learn from him the way of truth, saying:"Arise and go into the city, and there you will be told what you must do" (Acts 9:6). In this manner He teaches us tobe guided by those who are advanced on the way, so that the vision rightly given to Paul should not be wronglyinterpreted; otherwise it might lead later generations presumptuously to suppose that each individual must beinitiated into the truth directly by God, as Paul was, and not by the fathers.

"That this is the correct interpretation of these incidents can be seen not only from what is said here, but also fromSt Paul's own actions. He writes that he went up to Jerusalem to see Peter and James, and "laid before them thegospel 1 preach ... in case 1 was running or had run in vain" (Gal. 2: 2): and he did this even though the grace of theHoly Spirit was already with him, as can be seen from the miracles which he performed. Who, then, can be so proudand boastful as to be satisfied with his own judgment or opinion, when St Paul himself admits that he needs theadvice of those who were apostles before him? All this shows with complete clarity that the Lord reveals the way ofperfection only to those guided to it by their spiritual fathers. This accords with what He Himself has said throughthe Prophet: "Ask your father, and he will show you; your elders, and they will tell you" (Deut. 32:7).

'We should therefore make every effort to acquire for ourselves that gift of

discrimination which is able to keep usfrom excess in either direction. For, as the fathers have said, all extremes are

equally harmful. It is as dangerous to fast too much as it is to overfill the stomach; to stay awake too long as to sleeptoo much; and so on. 1 myself have known monks who were not defeated by gluttony, but were undermined by

immoderate fasting and lapsed into gluttony because of the weakness caused by this fasting. Indeed, I can rememberhaving experienced this one myself. I had kept such strict control over my food that I forgot what it meant to behungry, remaining without food for two or three days and still feeling no desire for it whatsoever, unless promptedby others. Then, through the wiles of the devil, I was so tormented by insomnia that, having remained awake formany nights, I begged God to grant me a little sleep. Thus I was in greater danger because of my immoderate fastingand insomnia than I was from gluttony and too much sleep.'

Abba Moses so cheered us with teaching of this kind that we could not help glorifying the Lord who grants suchgreat wisdom to those who fear Him; for to Him belong honor and power through all the ages. Amen.

Introductory Note

Little can be affirmed with confidence about the life of St Mark the Ascetic, also known as Mark the Monk or Mark theHermit. St Nikodimos dates him to the early fifth century, and this seems to be correct; according to another but less

probableview, he lived at the beginning of the sixth century. Like his contemporaiy St Neilos, he may have been a disciple of St JohnChrysostom, but this is not certain. As the Letter to Nicolas the Solitary indicates, Mark was living at one stage of his life as ahermit in the desert, although we cannot be sure where this was; both Palestine and Egypt have been suggested. Prior to this hemay have been superior of a community near Ankyra (Ankara), in Asia Minor. In addition to the three works included in thePhilokalia, Mark wrote at least six other treatises, the most important being those on baptism, on repentance, and againstNestorios. In his spiritual teaching, which is directed particularly against the heretical Syrian movement of Messalianism, helays great emphasis upon the role played by baptismal grace and provides a detailed analysis of the nature of temptations.'

In addition to the Greek text provided by St Nikodimos, we have had before us the variant readings found in the earliestGreek manuscripts of Mark's writings; we have indicated in the footnotes when we depart from the text of the printed GreekPhilokalia. In our translation of the treatises On the Spiritual Law and On Those who Think that They are Made Righteous byWorks, the numbering of sections follows that in the Greek Philokalia. In Migne, Patrologia Graeca, Ixv, the numbering isslightly different.

In the Orthodox Church Mark is commemorated as a saint on 5 March.

' See I. Hausherr, 'L'erreur fondamentale et la logique de Messalianisme', in Orientalia Christiana Periodica, i (1935), pp. 328-60, reprinted inI. Hausherr, Etudes de spiritualite oriental (Orientalia Christiana Analecto, 183, Rome, 1969), pp. 64-96; and Kallistos Ware, 'The Sacramentof Baptism and the Ascetic Life in the Teaching of Mark the Monk', in Studia Patristica, x (Texte und Untersuchungen, 107, Berlin, 1970), pp.441-52.

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1. Because you have often asked what the Apostle means when he says that 'the law is spiritual' (Rom. 7:14), andwhat kind of spiritual knowledge and action characterizes those who wish to observe it, we shall speak of thisas far as we can.

2. First of all, we know that God is the beginning, middle and end of everything good; and it is impossible for usto have faith in anything good or to carry it into effect except in Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

3. Everything good is given by the Lord providentially; and he who has faith that this is so will not lose what hehas been given.

4. Steadfast faith is a strong tower; and for one who has faith Christ comes to be all.

5. May He who inaugurates every good thing inaugurate all that you undertake, so that it may be done with Hisblessing.

6. When reading the Holy Scriptures, he who is humble and engaged in spiritual work will apply everything tohimself and not to someone else.

7. Call upon God to open the eyes of your heart, so that you may see the value of prayer and of spiritual readingwhen understood and applied.

8. If a man has some spiritual gift and feels compassion for those who do not have it, he preserves the gift becauseof his compassion. But a boastful man will lose it through succumbing to the temptations of boastfulness.

9. The mouth of a humble man speaks the truth; but he who speaks against the truth is like the servant who struckthe Lord on the face (cf Mark 14:65).

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10. Do not become a disciple of one who praises himself, in case you learn pride

instead of humility.

11. Do not grow conceited about your interpretations of Scripture, lest your intellect fall victim to blasphemy.

12. Do not attempt to explain something difficult with contentiousness, but in the way which the spiritual lawenjoins: with patience, prayer and unwavering hope.

13. Blind is the man crying out and saying: 'Son of David, have mercy on me' (Luke 18:38). He prays with the body

alone, and not yet with spiritual knowledge.

14. When the man once blind received his sight and saw the Lord, he acknowledged Him no longer as Son of David

but as Son of God, and worshipped Him (cf John 9; 38).

15. Do not grow conceited if you shed tears when you pray. For it is Christ who has touched your eyes and givenyou spiritual sight.

16. He who, like the blind man, casts away his garment and draws near to the Lord, becomes His disciple and apreacher of true doctrine (cf. Mark 10:50).

17. To brood on evil makes the heart brazen; but to destroy evil through self-restraint and hope breaks the heart.

18. There is a breaking of the heart which is gentle and makes it deeply penitent, and there is a breaking which isviolent and harmful, shattering it completely.

19. Vigils, prayer and patient acceptance of what comes constitute a breaking that does not harm but benefits theheart, provided we do not destroy the balance between them through excess. He who perseveres in them will behelped in other ways as well; but he who is slack and negligent will suffer intolerably on leaving this life.

20. A self-indulgent heart becomes a prison and chain for the soul when it leaves this life; whereas an assiduousheart is an open door.

21. 'The iron gate that leads into the city' is a hard heart (Acts 12 : 10); but to one

who suffers hardship and affliction

the gate will open of its own accord, as it did to Peter.

22. There are many differing methods of prayer. No method is harmful; if it were, it would be not prayer but theactivity of Satan.

23. A man wanted to do evil, but first prayed as usual; and finding himself prevented by God, he was then extremely

thankful.

24. When David wanted to kill Nabal the Carmelite, but was[VI] 112

reminded of the divine retribution and abandoned his intention, he was extremely thankful. Again, we know what hedid when he forgot God, and how he did not stop until Nathan the Prophet reminded him (cf. 1 Sam. 25; 2 Sam. 12).

25. At the times when you remember God, increase your prayers, so that when you forget Him, the Lord mayremind you.

26. When you read Holy Scripture, perceive its hidden meanings. 'For whatever was written in past times waswritten for our instruction' (Rom. 15:4).

27. Scripture speaks of faith as 'the substance of things hoped for' (Heb. 11:1), and describes as 'worthless' thosewho do not know the indwelling of Jesus (cf. 2 Cor. 13:5).

28. Just as a thought is made manifest through actions and words, so is our future reward through the impulses of the

heart.

29. Thus a merciful heart will receive mercy, while a merciless heart will receive the opposite.

30. The law of freedom teaches the whole truth. Many read about it in a

theoretical way, but few really understand

it, and these only in the degree to which they practice the commandments.

31. Do not seek the perfection of this law in human virtues, for it is not found perfect in them. Its perfection ishidden in the Cross of Christ.

32. The law of freedom is studied by means of true knowledge, it is understood through the practice of thecommandments, and is fulfilled through the mercy of Christ.

33. When we are compelled by our conscience to accomplish all the commandments of God, then we shallunderstand that the law of the Lord is faultless (cf. Ps. 19:8. LXX). It is performed through our good actions,but cannot be perfected by men without God's mercy.

34. Those who do not consider themselves under obligation to perform all Christ's commandments study the law of

God in a literal manner, 'understanding neither what they say nor what they affirm' (1 Tim. 1:7). Therefore theythink that they can fulfill it by their own works.

35. There are acts which appear to be good, but the motive of the person who does them is not good; and there are

other acts which appear to be bad, while the motive of the doer is good. The same is true of some statements.This discrepancy is due sometimes to

inexperience or ignorance, sometimes to evil intention, and sometimes to good intention.

36. When a man outwardly praises someone, while accusing and disparaging him in his heart, it is hard for thesimple to detect this. Similarly a person may be outwardly humble but inwardly arrogant. For a long time suchmen present falsehood as truth, but later they are exposed and condemned.

37. One man does something apparently good, in defense of his neighbor; another, by not doing it, gains inunderstanding.

38. Rebukes may be given in malice and self-defense, or out of fear of God and respect for truth.

39. Cease rebuking a man who has stopped sinning and who has repented. If you say that you are rebuking him inGod's name, first reveal the evils in yourself.

40. God is the source of every virtue, as the sun is of dayhght.

41. When you have done something good, remember the words 'without Me you can do nothing' (John 15:5).

42. Afflictions bring blessing to man; self-esteem and sensual pleasure, evil.

43. He who suffers injustice escapes sin, finding help in proportion to his affliction.

44. The greater a man's faith that Christ will reward him, the greater his readiness to endure every injustice.

45. By praying for those who wrong us we overthrow the devil; opposing them we are wounded by him.

46. Better a human than a demonic sin. Through performing the Lord's will we overcome both.

47. Every blessing comes from the Lord providentially. But this fact escapes the notice of the ungrateful and theidle.

48. Every vice leads in the end to forbidden pleasure; and every virtue to spiritual blessing. Each arouses what is

akin to it.

49. Censure from men afflicts the heart; but if patiently accepted it generates purity.

50. Ignorance makes us reject what is beneficial; and when it becomes brazen it

strengthens the hold of evil.

51. Even when nothing is going wrong, be ready for affliction; and since you will have to give an account, do notmake extortionate demands.

52. Having sinned secretly, do not try to hide. For 'all things are

naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we have to give an account' (Heb. 4:13).

53. Reveal yourself to the Lord in your mind. 'For man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the

heart' (i Sam. 16:7).

54. Think nothing and do nothing without a purpose directed to God. For to journey without direction is wastedeffort.

55. Because God's justice is inexorable, it is hard to obtain forgiveness for sins committed with completedeliberation.

56. Distress reminds the wise of God, but crushes those who forget Him.

57. Let all involuntary suffering teach you to remember God, and you will not lack occasion for repentance.

58. Forgetfulness as such has no power, but acquires it in proportion to our negligence.

59. Do not say; 'What can 1 do? 1 don't want to be forgetful but it happens.' For when you did remember, youcheated over what you owed.

60. Do good when you remember, and what you forget will be revealed to you; and do not surrender your mind to

blind forget-fuUness.

61. Scripture says: 'Hell and perdition are manifest to the Lord' (Prov. 15:11. LXX). This refers to ignorance of heart

and forgetful-ness.

62. Hell is ignorance, for both are dark; and perdition is forgetfulness, for both involve extinction.

63. Concern yourself with your own sins and not with those of your neighbor; then the workplace of your intellectwill not be robbed.

64. Failure to do the good that is within your power is hard to forgive. But mercy and prayer reclaim the negligent.

65. To accept an affliction for God's sake is a genuine act of holiness; for true love is tested by adversities.

66. Do not claim to have acquired virtue unless you have suffered affliction, for without affliction virtue has notbeen tested.

67. Consider the outcome of every involuntary affliction, and you will find it has been the destruction of sin.

68. Neighbors are very free with advice, but our own judgment is best.

69. If you want spiritual health, listen to your conscience, do all ittells you, and you will benefit.

70. God and our conscience know our secrets. Let them correct us.

70a. He who toils unwillingly grows poor in every way, while he who presses ahead in hope is doubly rich.

71. Man acts so far as he can in accordance with his own wishes; but God decides the outcome in accordance withjustice.

72. If you wish not to incur guilt when men praise you, first welcome reproof for your sins.

73. Each time someone accepts humiliation for the sake of Christ's truth he will be glorified a hundredfold by othermen. But it is better always to do good for the sake of blessings in the life to come.

74. When one man helps another by word or deed, let them both recognize in this the grace of God. He who doesnot understand this will come under the power of him who does.

75. Anyone who praises his neighbor out of hypocrisy will later abuse him and bring disgrace upon himself.

76. He who is ignorant of the enemy's ambush is easily slain; and" he who does not know the causes of the passionsis soon brought low.

77. Knowledge of what is good for him has been given to everyone by God; but self-indulgence leads to

negligence, and negligence to forgetfulness.

78. A man advises his neighbor according to his own understanding; but in the one who listens to such advice, Godacts in proportion to his faith.

79. I have seen unlearned men who were truly humble, and they became wiser than the wise.

80. Another unlearned man, upon hearing them praised, instead of imitating their humility, prided himself on beingunlearned and so fell into arrogance.

81. He who despises understanding and boasts of ignorance is unlearned not only in speech but also in knowledge(cf 2 Cor. 11:6).

82. Just as wisdom in speech is one thing and sound judgment another, so lack of learning in speech is one thingand folly another.

83. Ignorance of words will do no harm to the truly devout, nor will wisdom in speaking harm the humble.

84. Do not say: 'I do not know what is right, therefore I am not

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to blame when I fail to do it.' For if you did all the good about which you do know, what you should do next wouldthen become clear to you, as if you were passing through a house from one room to another. It is not helpful to knowwhat comes later before you have done what comes first. For knowledge without action 'puffs up', but 'love edifies',because it 'patiently accepts all things' (1 Cor. 8:1; 13:7).

85. Understand the words of Holy Scripture by putting them into practice, and do not fill yourself with conceit by

expatiating on theoretical ideas.

86. He who neglects action and depends on theoretical knowledge holds a staff of reed instead of a double-edged

sword; and when he confronts his enemies in time of war, 'it will go into his hand, and pierce it' (2 Kgs. 18:21),injecting its natural poison.

87. Every thought has its weight and measure in God's sight. For it is possible to think about the same thing either

passionately or objectively.

88. After fulfilling a commandment expect to be tempted: for love of Christ is tested by adversity.

89. Never belittle the significance of your thoughts, for not one escapes God's notice.

90. When you observe some thought suggesting that you seek human fame, you can be sure it will bring youdisgrace.

91. The enemy, understanding how the justice of the spiritual law is applied, seeks only the assent of our mind.Having secured this, he will either oblige us to undergo' the labors of repentance or, if we do not repent, willtorment us with misfortunes beyond our control. Sometimes he encourages us to resist these misfortunes so as

to increase our torment, and then, at our death, he wiU point to this impatient resistance as proof of our lack offaith.

92. Many have fought in various ways against circumstances; but without prayer and repentance no one has escaped

evil.

93. Evils reinforce each other; so do virtues, thus encouraging us to still greater efforts.

94. The devil belittles small sins; otherwise he cannot lead us into greater ones.

95. Praise from others engenders sinful desire, while their condemnation of vice, if not only heard but accepted,engenders self-restraint.

96. A self-indulgent monk has achieved nothing through his renunciation. For what he once did through possessions

he still does though possessing nothing.

97. Moreover, the self-controlled man, if he clings to possessions, is a brother in spirit of this kind of monk; because

they both feel inward enjoyment they have the same mother - though not the same father, since each has adifferent passion.

98. Sometimes a man cuts off a passion in order to indulge himself more fully,

and he is praised by those unaware of

his aim. He may even be unaware of it himself, and so his action is self-defeating.

99. All vice is caused by self-esteem and sensual pleasure; you cannot overcome passion without hating them.

100. Avarice is the root of all evil' (1 Tim. 6:10); but avarice is clearly a product of these two components.

101. The intellect is made blind by these three passions: avarice, self-esteem and sensual pleasure.

102. Scripture calls these three the daughters of the horseleech, dearly loved by their mother folly (cf. Prov. 30:15.LXX).

103. These three passions on their own dull spiritual knowledge and faith, the foster-brothers of our nature.

104. It is because of them that wrath, anger, war, murder and all other evils have such power over mankind.

105. We must hate avarice, self-esteem and sensual pleasure, as mothers of the vices and stepmothers of the virtues.

106. Because of them we are commanded not to love 'the world' and 'the things that are in the world' (1 John 2:15j;not so that we should hate God's creation through lack of discernment, but so that we should eliminate theoccasions for these three passions.

107. 'The soldier going to war', it is said, 'does not entangle himself in the affairs of this world' (2 Tim. 2:4). For hewho entangles himself with the passions while trying to overcome them is like a man who tries to put out a firewith straw.

108. If one becomes angry with one's neighbor on account of riches, fame or pleasure, one does not yet realize thatGod orders all things with justice.

109. When you hear the Lord saying that if someone does not renounce all that he has he 'is not worthy of Me'(Matt. 10:37), apply this not only to money but to

all forms of vice.

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110. He who does not know the truth cannot truly have faith; for by nature knowledge precedes faith.

111. Just as God assigns to everything visible what is appropriate, so He does also to human thoughts, whether wewish it or not.

112. If some obvious sinner who does not repent has suffered nothing before his death, you may be sure thatjudgment in his case will be merciless.

113. He who prays with understanding patiently accepts circumstances, whereas he who resents them has not yetattained pure prayer.

114. When harmed, insulted or persecuted by someone, do not think of the present but wait for the future, and youwill find he has brought you much good, not only in this life but also in the life to come.

115. Just as the bitterness of absinth helps a poor appetite, so misfortunes help a bad character. For the first benefitsthe physical condition, and the second leads to repentance.

116. If you do not want to suffer evil, do not inflict it, since the suffering of it inevitably follows its infliction. 'Forwhatever a man sows he will also reap' (Gal. 6:1).

117. Reaping unwillingly the wickedness we deliberately sow, we should marvel at God's justice.

118. Because an interval of time elapses between sowing and reaping, we begin to think there will be no requital.

119. When you sin, blame your thought, not your action. For had your intellect not run ahead, your body would nothave followed.

120. The secret sinner is worse than those who do evil openly; and so he receives a worse punishment.

121. The trickster who works mischief in secret is a snake 'lying in wait on the road and biting the horse's heel' (Gen.49:17. LXX).

122. If you praise your neighbor to one man and criticize him to another, you are the slave of self-esteem andjealousy. Through praise you try to hide your jealousy, through criticism to appear better than your neighbor.

123. Just as sheep and wolves cannot feed together, so a man cannot receive mercy if he tricks his neighbor.

124. He who secretly mingles his own wishes with spiritual counsel is an adulterer, as the Book of Proverbsindicates (cf. Prov. 6:32-33); and because of his stupidity he suffers pain and dishonor.

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125. Just as water and fire cannot be combined, so self-justification and humility exclude one another.

126. He who seeks forgiveness of his sins loves humility, but if he condemns another he seals his own wickedness.

127. Do not leave unobliterated any fault, however small, for it may lead you on to greater sins.

128. If you wish to be saved, welcome words of truth, and never reject criticism uncritically.

129. Words of truth converted the 'progeny of vipers' and warned them 'to flee from the anger to come' (Matt. 3:7).

130. To accept words of truth is to accept the divine Word; for He says: 'He that receives you receives me' (Matt.10:40).

131. The paralytic let down through the roof (cf Mark 2:4) signifies a sinner reproved in God's name by the faithfuland receiving forgiveness because of their faith.

132. It is better' to pray devoutly for your neighbor than to rebuke him every time he sins.

133. The truly repentant is derided by the foolish - which is a sign that God has accepted his repentance.

134. Those engaged in spiritual warfare practice self-control in everything, and do not desist until the Lord destroysall 'seed from Babylon' (Jer. 27:16. LXX).

135. Suppose that there are twelve shameful passions. Indulging in any one of them is equivalent to indulging inthem all.

136. Sin is a blazing fire. The less fuel you give it, the faster it dies down: the more you feed it, the more it bums.

137. When elated by praise, be sure disgrace will follow; for it is said: 'Whoever exalts himself will be abased' (Luke14:11).

138. When we have freed ourselves from every voluntary sin of the mind, we should then fight against the passionswhich result from prepossession.

139. Prepossession is the involuntary presence of former sins in the memory. At the stage of active warfare we try toprevent it from developing into a passion; after victory it is repulsed while still but a provocation.

140. A provocation is an image-free stimulation in the heart. Like a mountain-pass, the experienced take control of itahead of the enemy.

141. Once our thoughts are accompanied by images we have[VI] 120

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already given them our assent; for a provocation does not involve us in guilt so long as it is not accompanied by

images. Some people flee away from these thoughts like 'a brand plucked out of the fire' (Zech. 3:2); but others dallywith them, and so get burnt.

142. Do not say: 'I don't want it, but it happens.' For even though you may not want the thing itself, yet you welcomewhat causes it.

143. He who seeks praise is involved in passion; he who laments afflictions is attached to sensual pleasure.

144. The thoughts of a self-indulgent man vacillate, as though on scales; sometimes he laments and weeps for hissins, and sometimes he fights and contradicts his neighbor, justifying his own sensual pleasures.

145. He who tests all things and 'holds fast that which is good' (1 Thess. 5:21) will in consequence refrain from allevil.

146. 'A patient man abounds in understanding' (Prov. 14: 29); and so does he who listens to words of wisdom.

147. Without remembrance of God, there can be no true knowledgebut only that which is false.

148. Deeper spiritual knowledge helps the hard-hearted man: for unless he has fear, he refuses to accept the labor ofrepentance.

149. Unquestioning acceptance of tradition is helpful for a gentle person, for then he will not try God's patience oroften fall into sin.

150. Do not rebuke a forceful man for arrogance, but point out to him the danger of dishonor; if he has any sense hewill accept this kind of rebuke.

151. If you hate rebuke, it shows that the passion in which you are involved is due to your own free choice. But ifyou welcome rebuke, the passion is due to prepossession.

152. Do not listen to talk about other people's sins. For through such listening the form of these sins is imprinted onyou.

153. When you delight in hearing evil talk, be angry with yourself and not with the speaker. For listening in a sinfulway makes the messenger seem sinful.

154. If you come across people gossiping idly, consider yourself responsible for their talk - if not on account ofsome recent fault of your own, then because of an old debt.

155. If someone praises you hypocritically, be sure that in due course he will vilify you.

156. Accept present afflictions for the sake of future blessings; then you will never weaken in your struggle.

157. When someone supplies your bodily needs and you praise him as good in his own right apart from God, he will

later seem to you to be evil.

158. All good things come from God providentially, and those who bring them are the servants of what is good.

159. Accept with equanimity the intermingling of good and evil, and then God will resolve all inequity.

160. It is the uneven quality of our thoughts that produces changes m our condition. For God assigns to ourvoluntary thoughts consequences which are appropriate but not necessarily of our choice.

161. The sensible derives from the intelligible, by God's decree providing what is needed.

162. From a pleasure-loving heart arise unhealthy thoughts and words; and from the smoke of a fire we recognizethe fuel.

163. Guard your mind, and you will not be harassed by temptations. But if you fail to guard it, accept patientlywhatever trial comes.

164. Pray that temptation may not come to you; but when it comes, accept it as your due and not undeserved.

165. Reject all thoughts of greed, and you will be able to see the devil's tricks.

166. He who says he knows all the devil's tricks falls unknowingly into his trap.

167. The more the intellect withdraws from bodily cares, the more clearly it sees the craftiness of the enemy.

168. A man who is carried away by his thoughts is blinded by them; and while he can see the actual working of sin,he cannot see its causes.

169. It can happen that someone may in appearance be fulfilling a commandment but is in reality serving a passion,and through evil thoughts he destroys the goodness of the action.

170. When you first become involved in something evil, don't say: 'It will not overpower me.' For to the extent thatyou are involved you have already been overpowered by it.

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171. Everything that happens has a small beginning, and grows the more it is nourished.

172. Wickedness is an intricate net; and if someone is careless when partially

entangled, he gets completelyenmeshed.

173. Do not desire to hear about the misfortunes of your enemies. For those who like listening to such things willthemselves suffer what they wish for others.

174. Do not think that every affliction is a consequence of sin. For there are some who do God's will and yet are

tested. Thus it is written that the ungodly and wicked shall be persecuted (cf. Ps. 37: 28), but also that those who'seek to live a holy life in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution' (2 Tim. 3:12).

175. At a time of affliction, expect a provocation to sensual pleasure, for because it relieves the affliction it is readilywelcomed.

176. Some call men intelligent because they have the power of discernment on the sensible plane. But the reallyintelligent people are those who control their own desires.

177. Until you have eradicated evil, do not obey your heart; for it will seek more of what it already contains withinitself

178. Just as some snakes live in glens and others in houses, so there are some passions which take shape in ourthoughts while others express themselves in action. It is possible, however, for them to change from one type tothe other.

179. When you find that some thought is disturbing you deeply in yourself and is breaking the stillness of yourintellect with passion, you may be sure that it was your intellect which, taking the initiative, first activated thisthought and placed it in your heart.

180. No cloud is formed without a breath of wind: and no passion is bom without a thought.

181. If we no longer fulfill the desires of the flesh, then with the Lord's help the evils within us will easily beeliminated.

182. Images already established in our intellect are more pernicious and stubborn than those which arise while weare thmking. The latter precede the former and are their cause.

183. One kind of evil dwells in the heart through long-contmued prepossession; another kind attacks our thoughtsthrough the medium of everyday things.

184. God assesses our action according to our intention; for it is[VI] 123

said that the Lord will 'reward you according to your heart" (Ps. 20:4).

185. He who does not persevere in examining his conscience will not endure bodily suffering for God's sake.

186. The conscience is nature's book. He who applies what he reads there experiences God's help.

187. He who does not choose to suffer for the sake of truth will be chastened more painfully by suffering he has notchosen.

188. He who knows God's will, and performs it according to his power, escapes more severe suffering by suffering alittle.

189. If a man tries to overcome temptations without prayer and patient endurance, he wiU become more entangled inthem instead of driving them away.

190. The Lord is hidden in His own commandments, and He is to be found there in the measure that He is sought.

191. Do not say: 'I have fulfilled the commandments, but have not found the Lord'. For you have often found'spiritual knowledge with righteousness', as Scripture says, 'and those who rightly seek Him shall find peace'(Prov. 16:8. LXX).

192. Peace is deliverance from the passions, and is not found except through the action of the Holy Spirit.

193. Fulfilling a commandment is one thing, and virtue is another, although each promotes the other.

194. Fulfilling a commandment means doing what we are enjoined to do; but virtue is to do it in a manner thatconforms to the trath.

195. All material wealth is the same, but is acquired in many different ways; similarly, virtue is one, but is many-sided in its operations.

196. If someone makes a display of wisdom and instead of applying it talks at length, he has a spurious wealth andhis labors 'come into the houses of strangers' (Prov. 5:10. LXX).

197. It is said that gold rules everything; but spiritual things are ruled by the grace of God.

198. A good conscience is found through prayer, and pure prayer through the conscience. Each by nature needs theother.

199. Jacob made for Joseph a coat of many colors (cf Gen. 37:3), and the Lord gives knowledge of truth to thegentle; as

it is written, 'He will teach the gentle His ways' (Ps. 25:9. LXX).

200. Always do as much good as you can, and at a time of greater good do not turn to a lesser. For it is said that noman who turns back 'is fit for the kingdom of heaven' (cf. Luke 9:62).

1. In the texts which follow, the beliefs of those in error will be refuted by those whose faith is well founded andwho know the truth.

2. Wishing to show that to fulfill every commandment is a duty, whereas sonship is a gift given to men through His

own Blood, the Lord said: 'When you have done all that is commanded you, say: "We are useless servants: wehave only done what was our duty" ' (Luke 17:10). Thus the kingdom of heaven is not a reward for works, but agift of grace prepared by the Master for his faithful servants

3. A slave does not demand his freedom as a reward: but he gives satisfaction as one who is in debt, and he receives

freedom as a gift.

4. 'Christ died on account of our sins in accordance with the Scriptures' (1 Cor. 15:3); and to those who serve Him

well He gives freedom. 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' He says, 'you have been faithful over a fewthings, I will make you ruler over many things: enter into the joy of your Lord' (Matt. 25:21).

5. He who relies on theoretical knowledge alone is not yet a faithful servant: a faithful servant is one who expresses

his faith in Christ through obedience to His commandments.

6. He who honors the Lord does what the Lord bids. When he sins or is disobedient, he patiently accepts what comes

as something he deserves.

7. If you love true knowledge, devote yourself to the ascetic life; for mere theoretical knowledge puffs a man up (cf.

1 Cor. 8:1).

8. Unexpected trials are sent by God to teach us to practice the[VI] 126

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ascetic life; and they lead us to repentance even when we are reluctant.

9. Afflictions that come to us are the result of our own sins. But if we accept them patiently through prayer, we shall

again find blessings,

10. Some people when praised for their virtue are delighted, and attribute this pleasurable feeling of self-esteem tograce. Others when reproved for their sins are pained, and they mistake this beneficial pain for the action of sin.

11. Those who, because of the rigor of their own ascetic practice, despise the less zealous, think that they are maderighteous by physical works. But we are even more foolish if we rely on theoretical knowledge and disparagethe ignorant.

12. Even though knowledge is true, it is still not firmly established if unaccompanied by works. For everything is

established by being put into practice.

13. Often our knowledge becomes darkened because we fail to put things into practice. For when we have totallyneglected to practice something, our memory of it will gradually disappear.

14. For this reason Scripture urges us to acquire the knowledge of God, so that through our works we may serveHim rightly.

15. When we fulfill the commandments in our outward actions, we receive from the Lord what is appropriate; but

any real benefit we gain depends on our inward intention.

16. If we want to do something but cannot, then before God, who knows our hearts, it is as if we have done it. This

is true whether the intended action is good or bad.

17. The intellect does many good and bad things without the body, whereas the

body can do neither good nor evilwithout the intellect. This is because the law of freedom applies to what happens before we act.

18. Some without fulfilling the commandments think that they possess true faith. Others fulfill the commandmentsand then expect the kingdom as a reward due to them. Both are mistaken.

19. A master is under no obligation to reward his slaves; on the other hand, those who do not serve him well are not

given their freedom.

20. If 'Christ died on our account in accordance with the Scriptures' (Rom. 5: 8; 1 Cor. 15:3), and we do not 'live for[VI] 127

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ourselves', but 'for Him who died and rose' on our account (2 Cor. 5:15), it is clear that we are debtors to Christ toserve Him till our death. How then can we regard sonship as something which is our due?

21. Christ is Master by virtue of His own essence and Master by virtue of His incarnate life. For He creates manfrom nothing, and through His own Blood redeems him when dead in sin: and to those who believe in Him Hehas given His grace.

22. When Scripture says 'He will reward every man according to his works' (Matt. 16: 27), do not imagine thatworks in themselves merit either hell or the kingdom. On the contrary, Christ rewards each man according towhether his works are done with faith or without faith in Himself; and He is not a dealer bound by contract, butGod our Creator and Redeemer.

23. We who have received baptism offer good works, not by way of repayment, but to preserve the purity given to

24. Every good work which we perform through our own natural powers causes

us to refrain from the corresponding

sin: but without grace it cannot contribute to our sanctification.

25. The self-controlled refrain from gluttony; those who have renounced possessions, from greed; the tranquil, from

loquacity; the pure, from self-indulgence; the modest, from unchastity: the self-dependent, from avarice: thegentle, from agitation; the humble, from self-esteem; the obedient, from quarrelling; the self-critical, fromhypocrisy. Similarly, those who pray are protected from despair: the poor, from having many possessions:confessors of the faith, from its denial: martyrs, from idolatry. Do you see how every virtue that is performedeven to the point of death is nothing other than refraining from sin? Now to refrain from sin is a work within ourown natural powers, but not something that buys us the kingdom.

26. While man can scarcely keep what belongs to him by nature, Christ gives the grace of sonship through the Cross.

27. Certain commandments are specific, and others are comprehensive. Thus Christ enjoins us specifically to 'sharewith him who has none' (Luke 3:11); and He gives us a comprehensive command to forsake all that we have (cf.Luke 14:33).

28. There is an energy of grace not understood by beginners, and there is also an energy of evil which resembles thetruth. It is

advisable not to scrutinize these energies too closely, because one may be led astray, and not to condemn them outof hand, because they may contain some truth, but we should lay everything before God in hope, for He knows whatis of value in both of them.

29. He who wants to cross the spiritual sea is long-suffering, humble, vigilant and self-controlled. If he impetuously

embarks on it without these four virtues, he agitates his heart, but cannot cross.

30. Stillness helps us by making evil inoperative.' If it also takes to itself these four virtues in prayer, it is the mostdirect support in attaining dispassion.

31. The intellect cannot be still unless the body is still also: and the wall between them cannot be demolishedwithout stillness and prayer.

32. The flesh with its desire is opposed to the spirit, and the spirit opposed to the flesh, and those who live in the

spirit will not carry out the desire of the flesh (cf Gal. 5:15-17).

33. There is no perfect prayer unless the intellect invokes God: and when our thought cries aloud without distraction,

the Lord will listen.

34. When the intellect prays without distraction it afflicts the heart: and 'a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou

wilt not despise' (Ps. 51:17).

35. Prayer is called a virtue, but in reality it is the mother of the virtues: for it gives birth to them through union with

Christ.

36. Whatever we do without prayer and without hope in God turns out afterwards to be harmful and defective.

37. Christ's words that the 'first will be last, and the last will be first' (Matt. 19:30) refer to those who participate inthe virtues and those who participate in love. For love is the last of the virtues to be bom in the heart, but it isthe first in value, so that those bom before it turn out to be 'the last''.

38. If you are listless when you pray or afflicted by various forms of evil, call to

mind your death and the torments

of hell. But it is better to cleave to God through hope and prayer than to think about external things, eventhough such thoughts may be helpful.

39. No single virtue by itself opens the door of our nature: but all the virtues must be linked together in the correct

sequence.

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40. He whose mind teems with thoughts lacks seh'-control; and even when they are beneficial, hope is more so.

41. There is a sin which is always 'unto death' (1 John 5:16): the sin for which we do not repent. For this sin even a

saint's prayers will not be heard.

42. He who repents rightly does not imagine that it is his own effort which cancels his former sins; but through this

effort he makes his peace with God.

43. If we are under an obligation to perform daily all the good actions of which our nature is capable, what do wehave left over to give to God in repayment for our past sins?

44. However great our virtuous actions of today, they do not requite but condemn our past negligence.

45. He who suffers affliction in his intellect but relaxes physically is like one who suffers affliction in his body while

allowing his intellect to be dispersed.

46. Voluntary affliction in one of these parts of our nature benefits the other: to suffer affliction with the mindbenefits the flesh, and to suffer it with the flesh benefits the mind. When our mind and flesh are not in union,^our state deteriorates.

47. It is a great virtue to accept patiently whatever comes and, as the Lord enjoins, to love a neighbor who hates you.

48. The sign of sincere love is to forgive wrongs done to us. It was with such love that the Lord loved the world.

49. We cannot with all our heart forgive someone who does us wrong unless we possess real knowledge. For this

knowledge shows us that we deserve all we experience.

50. You will lose nothing of what you have renounced for the Lord's sake. For in its own time it will return to you

greatly multiplied.

51. When the intellect forgets the purpose of true devotion, then external works of virtue bring no profit.

52. If poor judgment is harmful to everyone, it is particularly so to those who live with great strictness.

53. Philosophize through your works about man's will and God's retribution. For your words are only as wise and as

profitable as your works.

54. Those who suffer for the sake of true devotion receive help.[VI] 130

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This must be learnt through obeying God's law and our own conscience.

55. One man received a thought and accepted it without examination. Another received a thought and tested its truth.

Which of them acted with greater reverence?

56. Real knowledge is patiently to accept affliction and not to blame others for our own misfortunes.

57. He who does something good and expects a reward is serving not God but his own will.

58. A sinner cannot escape retribution except through repentance appropriate to his offence.

59. There are those who claim that we cannot do good unless we actively receive the grace of the Spirit.

60. Those who always by choice incline to sensual pleasures refrain from doing what lies within their power on the

grounds that they lack-help.

61. Grace has been given mystically to those who have been baptized into Christ: and it becomes active within them

to the extent that they actively observe the commandments. Grace never ceases to help us secretly: but to dogood- as far as lies in our power -depends on us.

62. Initially grace arouses the conscience in a divine manner. That is how even sinners have come to repent and so to

conform to God's will.

63. Again, grace may be hidden in advice given by a neighbor. Sometimes it also accompanies our understanding

during reading, and as a natural result teaches our intellect the truth about itself. If, then, we do not hide thetalent given to us in this way, we shall enter actively

into the joy of the Lord.

64. He who seeks the energies of the Spirit, before he has actively observed the commandments, is like someonewho sells himself into slavery and who, as soon as he is bought, asks to be given his freedom while still keepinghis purchase-money.

61. When you have found that external events come to you through God's justice, then in your search for the Lordyou have found 'spiritual knowledge and justice' (cf. Prov. 16:8. LXX).

66. Once you recognize that the Lord's judgments 'are in all the earth' (1 Chr. 16:14), then everything that happens to

you will teach you knowledge of God.

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67. Everyone receives what he deserves in accordance with his inner state. But only God understands the many

different ways in which this happens.

68. When you suffer some dishonor from men, recognize at once the glory that will be given you by God. Then you

will not be saddened or upset by the dishonor; and when you receive the glory you will remain steadfast andinnocent.

69. When God allows you to be praised, do not become boastful on account of this divine providence, lest you then

fall into dishonor.

70. A seed will not grow without earth and water; and a man will not develop

without voluntary suffering and divine

help.

71. Rain cannot fall without a cloud, and we cannot please God without a good conscience.

72. Do not refuse to learn, even though you may be very intelligent. For what God provides has more value than our

own intelligence.

73. When through some sensual pleasure the heart is deflected from the ascetic way, it becomes difficult to control,

like a heavy stone dislodged on steep ground.

74. Like a young calf which, in its search for grazing, finds itself on a ledge surrounded by precipices, the soul is

gradually led astray by its thoughts.

75. When the intellect, having grown to full maturity in the Lord, wrenches the soul from long-continued

prepossession, the heart suffers torments as if on the rack, since intellect and passion drag it in oppositedirections.

76. Just as sailors, in the hope of gain, gladly endure the burning heat of the sun, so those who hate wickedness

gladly accept reproof. For the former contend with the winds, the latter with passions.

77. Just as flight in winter or on the Sabbath day (cf Matt. 24: 2o) brings suffering to the flesh and defilement to the

soul, so too does resurgence of the passions in an aged body and a consecrated soul.

78. No one is as good and merciful as the Lord. But even He does not forgive the

unrepentant.

79. Many of us feel remorse for our sins, yet we gladly accept their causes.

80. A mole burrowing in the earth is blind and cannot see the stars; and he who does not trust God in temporal

things will not trust Him in eternal things.

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81. Real knowledge has been given to men by God as a grace preceding the fullness of grace; it teaches those who

partake of it to believe above all in the Giver.

82. When a sinful soul does not accept the afflictions that come to it, the angels say: 'We would have healedBabylon, but she was not healed' (Jer. 51:9)

83. When an intellect forgets real knowledge, it fights with men for harmful things as though they were helpful.

84. Fire cannot last long in water, nor can a shameful thought in a heart that loves God. For every man who loves

God suffers gladly, and voluntary suffering is by nature the enemy of sensual pleasure.

85. A passion which we aUow to grow active within us through our own choice afterwards forces itself upon us

against our wiU.

86. We have a love for the causes of involuntary thoughts, and that is why they come. In the case of voluntarythoughts we clearly have a love not only for the

causes but also for the objects with which they are concerned.

87. Presumption and boastfulness are causes of blasphemy. Avarice and self-esteem are causes of cruelty andhypocrisy.

88. When the devil sees that our intellect has prayed from the heart, he makes a powerful attack with subtletemptations; but he does not bother to destroy the lesser virtues by such powerful attacks.

89. When a thought lingers within a man, this indicates his attachment to it; but when it is quickly destroyed, this

signifies his opposition and hostility to it.

90. The intellect changes from one to another of three different noetic states; that according to nature, above nature,

and contrary to nature. When it enters the state according to nature, it finds that it is itself the cause of evilthoughts, and confesses its sins to God, clearly understanding the causes of the passions. When it is in the statecontrary to nature, it forgets God's justice and fights with men, believing itself unjustly treated. But when it israised to the state above nature, it finds the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, peace and the other fruits ofwhich the Apostle speaks (cf. Gal. 5:22); and it knows that if it gives priority to bodily cares it cannot remain inthis state. An intellect that departs from this state falls into sin and all the terrible consequences of sin - if notimmediately, then in due time, as God's justice shall decide.

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91. Each man's knowledge is genuine to the extent that it is confirmed by gentleness, humility and love.

92. Everyone baptized in the orthodox manner has received mystically the

fullness of grace; but he becomesconscious of this grace only to the extent that he actively observes the commandments.

93. If we fulfill Christ's commandments according to our conscience, we are spiritually refreshed to the extent thatwe suffer in our heart. But each thing comes to us at the right time.

94. Pray persistently about everything, and then you will never do anything without God's help.

95. Nothing is stronger than prayer in its action, nothing more effective in winning God's favor.

96. Prayer comprises the complete fulfillment of the commandments; for there is nothing higher than love for God.

97. Undistracted prayer is a sign of love for God; but careless or distracted prayer is a sign of love for pleasure.

98. He who can without strain keep vigil, be long-suffering and pray is manifestly a partaker of the Holy Spirit. But

he who feels strain while doing these things, yet willingly endures it, also quickly receives help.

99. One commandment is higher than another; consequently one level of faith is more firmly founded than another.

100. There is faith 'that comes by hearing' (Rom. 10:17) and there is faith that 'is the substance of things hoped for'(Heb. 11:1).

101. It is good to help enquirers with words; but it is better to co-operate with them through prayer and the practiceof virtue. For he who through these offers himself to God, helps his neighbor through helping himself.

102. If you want with a few words to benefit one who is eager to learn, speak to him about prayer, right faith, andthe patient acceptance of what comes. For all else that is good is found through these.

103. Once we have entrusted our hope about something to God, we no longer

quarrel with our neighbor over it.

104. If, as Scripture teaches, everything involuntary has its cause in what is voluntary, man has no greater enemythan himself

105. The first among all evils is ignorance; next comes lack of faith.

106. Escape from temptation through patience and prayer. If

you oppose temptation without these, it only attacks you more strongly.

107. He who is gentle in God's sight is wiser than the wise; and he who is humble in heart is stronger than thestrong. For they bear the yoke of Christ with spiritual knowledge.

108. Everything we say or do without prayer afterwards turns out to be unreliable or harmful, and so shows us upwithout our realizing it.

109. One alone is righteous in works, words and thoughts. But many are made righteous in faith, grace andrepentance.

110. One who is repentant cannot be haughty, just as one who sins deliberately cannot be humble-minded.

111. Humility consists, not in condemning our conscience, but in recognizing God's grace and compassion.

112. What a house is to the air, the spiritual intellect is to divine grace. The more you get rid of materiality, the morethe air and grace will come in of their own accord; and the more you increase materiality, the more they will goaway.

113. Materiality in the case of a house consists of furnishings and food. Materiality in the case of the intellect is self-esteem and sensual pleasure.

114. Ample room in the heart denotes hope in God; congestion denotes bodily care.

115. The grace of the Spirit is one and unchanging, but energizes in each one of us as He wills (cf 1 Cor. 12:11).

116. When rain falls upon the earth, it gives life to the quality inherent in each plant: sweetness in the sweet,astringency in the astringent; similarly, when grace falls upon the hearts of the faithful, it gives to each theenergies appropriate to the different virtues without itself changing.

117. To him who hungers after Christ grace is food; to him who is thirsty, a reviving drink; to him who is cold, agarment; to him who is weary, rest; to him who prays, assurance; to him who mourns, consolation.

118. When you hear Scripture saying of the Holy Spirit that He 'rested upon each' of the Apostles (Acts 2:3), or'came upon' the Prophet (1 Sam. 11:6), or 'energizes' (1 Cor. 12:11), or is 'grieved' (Eph. 4:30), or is 'quenched'

(1 Thess. 5:19), oris[VI] 135

'vexed (Isa. 63:10), and again, that some 'have the first fruits' (Rom. 8:23), and that others are 'filled with the HolySpirit' (Acts 2:4), do not suppose that the Spirit is subject to some kind of division, variation or change: but be surethat, in the way we have described. He is unvarying, unchanging and all-powerful. Therefore in all His energies Heremains what He is, and in a divine manner He gives to each person what is needful. On those who have beenbaptized He pours Himself out in His fullness like the sun. Each of us is illumined by Him to the extent to which wehate the passions that darken us and get rid of them. But in so far as we have a love for them and dwell on them, weremain in darkness.

119. He who hates the passions gets rid of their causes. But he who is attracted by their causes is attacked by thepassions even though he does not wish it.

120. When evil thoughts become active within us, we should blame ourselves and not ancestral sin.

121. The roots of evil thoughts are the obvious vices, which we keep trying to justify in our words and actions.

122. We cannot entertain a passion in our mind unless we have a love for its causes.

123. For what man, who cares nothing about being put to shame, entertains thoughts of self-esteem? Or whowelcomes contempt and yet is disturbed by dishonor? And who has 'a broken and a contrite heart' (Ps. 51:17)and yet indulges in carnal pleasure? Or who puts his trust in Christ and yet worries or quarrels about transitorythings?

124. If a man is treated with contempt by someone and yet does not react with anger in either word or thought, itshows he has acquired real knowledge and firm faith in the Lord.

125. 'The sons of men are false, and cheat with their scales' (Ps. 62:9. LXX), but God assigns to each what is just.

126. If the criminal will not keep his gains for ever and his victim will not always suffer want, 'surely man passeslike a shadow and troubles himself in vain' (Ps. 39:6. LXX).

127. When you see someone suffering great dishonor, you may be sure that he was carried away by thoughts of self-esteem and is now reaping, much to his disgust, the harvest from the seeds which he sowed in his heart.

128. He who enjoys bodily pleasures beyond the proper limit will pay for the excess a hundredfold in sufferings.[VI] 136

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129. A man exercising authority should tell his subordinate his duty; and, if

disobeyed, should warn him of the evilconsequences.

130. He who suffers wrong and does not demand any reparation from the man who wronged him, trusts in Christ tomake good the loss; and he is rewarded a hundredfold in this world and inherits eternal life (cf Mark 10:30).

131. The remembrance of God is suffering of heart endured in a spirit of devotion. But he who forgets God becomesself-indulgent and insensitive.

132. Do not say that a dispassionate man cannot suffer affliction: for even if he does not suffer on his own account,he is under a liability to do so for his neighbor.

133. When the enemy has booked against a man many forgotten sins, he forces his debtor to recall them in memory,taking fall advantage of 'the law of sin' (cf. Rom. 8: 2).

134. If you wish to remember God unceasingly, do not reject as undeserved what happens to you, but patientlyaccept it as your due. For patient acceptance of whatever happens kindles the remembrance of God, whereasrefusal to accept weakens the spiritual purpose of the heart and so makes it forgetful.

135. If you want your sins to be 'covered' by the Lord (cf. Ps. 32:1), do not display your virtues to others. Forwhatever we do with our virtues, God will also do with our sins.

136. Having hidden your virtue, do not be filled with pride, imagining you have achieved righteousness. Forrighteousness is not only to hide your good actions, but also never to think forbidden thoughts.

137. Rejoice, not when you do good to someone, but when you endure without rancor the hostility that follows. Forjust as night follows day, so acts of malice follow acts of kindness.

138. Acts of kindness and generosity are spoilt by self-esteem, meanness and pleasure, unless these have first beendestroyed by fear of God.

139. The mercy of God is hidden in sufferings not of our choice, and if we accept such sufferings patiently, theybring us to repentance and deliver us from everlasting punishment.

140. Some, when they actively observe the commandments, expect this to outweigh their sins; others, who observethe commandments without this presumption, gain the grace of Him who

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died on account of our sins. We should consider which of these is right.

141. Fear of hell and love for God's kingdom enable us patiently to accept affliction; and this they do, not bythemselves, but through Him who knows our thoughts.

142. He who believes in the blessings of the world to come abstains of his own accord from the pleasures of thispresent world. But he who lacks such faith becomes pleasure-loving and insensitive.

143. Do not ask how a poor man can be self-indulgent when he lacks the material means. For it is possible to be self-indulgent in a yet more despicable way through one's thoughts.

144. Knowledge of created beings is one thing, and knowledge of the divine truth is another. The second surpasses

the first just as the sun outshines the moon.

145. Knowledge of created beings increases the more we observe the commandments actively: but knowledge of thetruth grows the more we hope in Christ.

146. If you wish to be saved and 'to come unto the knowledge of the truth' (1 Tim. 2:4), endeavor always totranscend sensible things, and through hope alone to cleave to God. Then you will find principalities andpowers fighting against you (cf Eph. 6:12), deflecting you against your will and provoking you to sin. But ifyou prevail over them through prayer and maintain your hope, you will

receive God's grace, and this willdeliver you from the wrath to come.

147. If you understand what is said in a mystical sense by St Paul, that 'we wrestle . . . against spiritual wickedness'(Eph. 6:12), you will also understand the parable of the Lord, which He spoke 'to this end, that men oughtalways to pray, and not to lose heart' (Luke 18:1).

148. The Law figuratively commands men to work for six days and on the seventh to rest (cf. Exod. 20:9-10). Theterm 'work' when applied to the soul signifies acts of kindness and generosity by means of our possessions - thatis, through material things. But the soul's rest and repose is to sell everything and 'give to the poor' (Matt.19:21), as Christ Himself said: so through its lack of possessions it will rest from its work and devote itself tospiritual hope. Such is the rest into which Paul also exhorts us to enter, saying: 'Let us strive therefore to enterinto that rest'(Heb. 4:11).

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149. In saying this we are sot forgetting the blessings of the life to come or limiting the universal reward to thepresent life. We are simply affirming that it is necessary in the first place to have the grace of the Holy Spiritenergizing the heart and so, in proportion to this energizing, to enter into the kingdom of heaven. The Lordmade this clear in saying: 'The kingdom, of heaven is within you' (cf. Luke 17:21). The Apostle, too, said thesame: 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for' (Heb. 11:1): 'Run, that you may reach your goal' (1 Cor. 9:24);'Examine yourselves whether you are in the faith. ... Do you not know . . . that Jesus Christ is in you unless youare worthless' (2 Cor. 13:5).

150. He who has come to know the truth does not oppose the afflictions that befall him, for he knows that they leadhim to the fear of God.

151. To recall past sins in detail inflicts injury on the man who hopes in God. For when such recollection bringsremorse it deprives him of hope; but if he pictures the sins to himself without remorse, they pollute him againwith the old

defilement.

152. When the intellect through rejection of the passions attains to unwavering hope, then the enemy makes itvisualize its past sins on the pretext of confessing them to God. Thus he tries to rekindle passions which byGod's grace have been forgotten, and so secretly to inflict injury. Then, even though someone is illumined andhates the passions, he will inevitably be filled with darkness and confusion at the memory of what he has done.But if he is still befogged and self-indulgent, he will certainly dally with the enemy's provocations and entertainthem under the influence of passion, so that this recollection will prove to be a prepossession and not aconfession.

153. If you wish to make a blameless confession to God do not go over your failings in detail, but firmly resist theirrenewed attacks.

154. Trials come upon us because of our former sins, bringing what is appropriate to each offence.

155. The man who possesses spiritual knowledge and understands the truth confesses to God, not by recalling whathe has done, but by accepting patiently what comes.

156. If you refuse to accept suffering and dishonor, do not claim to be in a state of repentance because of your othervirtues. For self-esteem and msensitivitv can serve sin even under the cover of virtue.

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157. Just as suffering and dishonor usually give birth to virtues, so pleasure and self-esteem usually give birth tovices.

158. All bodily pleasure results from previous laxity, and laxity results from lack of faith.

159. He who is under the power of sin cannot by himself prevail over the will of the flesh, because he sufferscontinual stimulation in all his members.

160. Those who are under the sway of passions must pray and be obedient. For even when they receive help, theycan only just manage to fight against their preposessions.

161. He who tries to conquer his own will by means of obedience and prayer is following a wise ascetic method. Hisrenunciation of external things indicates his inward struggle.

162. He who does not make his will agree with God is tripped up by his own schemes and falls into the hands of hisenemies.

163. When you see two evil men befriending one another, you may be sure that each is co-operating with the other'sdesires.

164. The haughty and the conceited gladly agree together; for the haughty man praises the conceited man who fawnson him in a servile manner, while the conceited man extols the haughty man who continually praises him.

165. The man who loves God benefits from both praise and blame: if commended for his good actions he growsmore zealous, and if reproved for his sins he is brought to repentance. Our outward life should accord with ourinner progress, and our prayers to God with our life.

166. It is good to hold fast to the principal commandment, and not to be anxious about particular things or to prayfor them specifically, but to seek only the kmgdom and the word of God (cf Matt. 6: 25-33). If, however, weare still anxious about our particular needs, we should also pray for each of them. He who does or plansanything without prayer will not succeed in the end. And this is what the Lord meant when He said; 'WithoutMe you can do nothing' (John 15:5).

167. If a man disregards the commandment about prayer, he then commits worse acts of disobedience, each onehanding him over to the next like a prisoner.

168. He who accepts present afflictions in the expectation of

future blessings has found knowledge of the truth; and he will easily be freed from anger and remorse.

169. He who chooses maltreatment and dishonor for the sake of truth is walking on the apostolic path: he has takenup the cross and is bound in chains (cf Matt. 16: 24: Acts 28:20). But when he tries to concentrate his attentionon the heart without accepting these two, his intellect wanders from the path and he falls into the temptationsand snares of the devil.

170. In our ascetic warfare we can neither rid ourselves of evil thoughts apart from their causes, nor of their causeswithout ridding ourselves of the thoughts. For if we reject the one without the other, before long the other willinvolve us in them both at once.

171. He who fights against others out of fear of hardship or reproach will either suffer more harshly through whatbefalls him in this life, or will be punished mercilessly in the life to come.

172. He who wishes to be spared all misfortunes should associate God with everything through prayer: with hisintellect he should set his hope in Him, putting aside, so far as possible, all concern about things of the senses.

173. When the devil finds someone preoccupied needlessly with bodily things, he first deprives him of the hard-wonfruits of spiritual knowledge, and then cuts off his hope in God.

174. If you should ever reach the stronghold of pure prayer, do not accept the knowledge of created things which ispresented to you at that moment by the enemy, lest you lose what is greater. For it is better to shoot at him fromabove with the arrows of prayer, cooped up as he is down below, then to parley with him as he offers us theknowledge he has plundered, and tries to tear us away from this prayer which defeats him.

175. Knowledge of created things helps a man at a time of temptation and

listlessness: but at a time of pure prayer itis usually harmful.

176. If it is your task to give spiritual instruction and you are disobeyed, grieve inwardly but do not be outwardlyupset. For if you grieve, you will not share the guilt of the person who disobeys you: but if you are upset youwill be tested by the same temptations as he is.

177. When you are explaining things, do not conceal what is[VI] 141

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relevant to the needs of those present. You should discuss explicitly whatever is seemly, but refer less explicitly towhat is hard to accept.

178. If someone is not under obedience to you, do not rebuke him to his face for his faults. For that would imply youhave authority over him, and are not just giving advice.

179. What is said without explicit reference to individuals is helpful to all, for each applies it to himself according tohis own conscience.

180. He who speaks rightly should recognize that he receives the words from God. For the truth belongs not to himwho speaks, but to God who is energizing him.

181. Do not argue with people not under obedience to you when they oppose the truth; otherwise you may arousetheir hatred.

182. If you give way when someone who is under obedience to you wrongly contradicts you, you lead him astrayover the point at issue and also encourage him to repudiate his promise of obedience.

183. He who with fear of God admonishes or corrects a man who has sinned, gains the virtue that is opposite to thatsin. But he who reproaches him out of rancor and ill will becomes subject to a similar passion, according to thespiritual law.

184. He who has learned the law properly fears the Lawgiver and, fearing Him, he turns away from every evil.

185. Do not be double-tongued, saying one thing when your conscience says another. For Scripture places suchpeople under a curse (cf. Ecclus. 28:13).

186. One man speaks the truth and is hated for it by the foolish: another speaks hypocritically and for this reason isloved. But in both cases their reward is not long delayed, for at the appropriate moment the Lord renders to eachhis due.

187. He who wishes to avoid future troubles should endure his present troubles gladly. For in this way, balancing theone against the other, through small sufferings he will avoid those which are great.

188. Guard your speech from boasting and your thoughts from presumption: otherwise you may be abandoned byGod and fall into sin. For man cannot do anything good without the help of God, who sees everything.

189. God, who sees everything, rewards at their proper value not only our actions but also our voluntary thoughtsand purposes.

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190. Involuntary thoughts arise from previous sin; voluntary ones from our free will. Thus the latter are the cause ofthe former.

191. Evil thoughts which arise against our will are accompanied by remorse, and so they soon disappear; but whenthey are freely chosen, they are accompanied by pleasure, and so they are hard to get rid of.

192. The self-indulgent are distressed by criticism and hardship; those who love God by praise and luxury.

193. He who does not understand God's judgments walks on a ridge like a knife-

edge and is easily unbalanced byevery puff of wind. When praised, he exults; when criticized, he feels bitter. When he feasts, he makes a pig of

himself; and when he suffers hardship, he moans and groans. When he understands, he shows off; and when hedoes not understand, he pretends that he does. When rich, he is boastful; and when in poverty, he plays thehypocrite. Gorged, he grows brazen; and when he fasts, he becomes arrogant. He quarrels with those whoreprove him; and those who forgive him he regards as fools.

194. Unless a man acquires, through the grace of Christ, knowledge of the truth and fear of God, he is gravelywounded not only by the passions but also by the things that happen to him.

195. When you want to resolve a complex problem, seek God's will in the matter, and you will find a constructivesolution.

196. When something accords with God's will, all creation aids it. But when God rejects something, creation toooppposes it.

197. He who opposes unpleasant events opposes the command of God unwittingly. But when someone accepts themwith real knowledge, he 'waits patiently for the Lord' (Ps. 27; 14).

198. When tested by some trial you should try to find out not why or through whom it came, but only how to endureit gratefully, without distress or rancor.

199. Another man's sin does not increase our own, unless we ourselves embrace it by means of evil thoughts.

200. If it is not easy to find anyone conforming to God's will who has not been put to the test, we ought to thankGod for everything that happens to us.

201. If Peter had not failed to catch anything during the night's fishing (cf Luke 5:5), he would not have caughtanything during the day. And if Paul had not suffered physical blindness (cf Acts

9:8), he would not have been given spiritual sight. And if Stephen had not been slandered as a blasphemer, he wouldnot have seen the heavens opened and have looked on God (cf Acts 6:15; 7:56).

202. As work according to God is called virtue, so unexpected affliction is called a test.

203. God 'tested Abraham' (cf. Gen. 22:1-14), that is, God afflicted him for his own benefit, not in order to learnwhat kind of man Abraham was - for He knew him, since He knows all things before they come into existence -but in order to provide him with opportunities for showing perfect faith.

204. Every affliction tests our will, showing whether it is inclined to good or evil. This is why an unforeseenaffliction is called a test, because it enables a man to test his hidden desires.

205. The fear of God compels us to .fight against evil; and when we fight against evil, the grace of God destroys it.

206. Wisdom is not only to perceive the natural consequence of things, but also to accept as our due the malice ofthose who wrong us. People who go no further than the first kind of wisdom become proud, whereas those whoattain the second become humble.

207. If you do not want evil thoughts to be active within you, accept humiliation of soul and affliction of the flesh;and this not just on particular occasions, but always, everywhere and in all things.

208. He who willingly accepts chastening by affliction is not dominated by evil thoughts against his will; whereas he

who does not accept affliction is taken prisoner by evil thoughts, even though he resists them.

209. When you are wronged and your heart and feehngs are hardened, do not be distressed, for this has happenedprovidentiaUy; but be glad and reject the

thoughts that arise within you, knowing that if they are destroyed at thestage when they are only provocations, their evil consequences will be cut off, whereas if the thoughts persistthe evil may be expected to develop.

210. Without contrition of the heart, it is altogether impossible to rid ourselves of evil. Now the heart is madecontrite by threefold self-control: in sleep, in food and in bodily relaxation. For excess of these three thingsleads to self-indulgence: and this in turn makes us accept evil thoughts, and is opposed to prayer and toappropriate work.

211. If it is your duty to give orders to your brethren, be mindful[VI] 144

of your role and, when they contradict you, do not fail to tell them what is necessary. When they obey you, you willbe rewarded because of their virtue; but when they disobey you, you will none the less forgive them, and willequally be rewarded by Him who said: 'Forgive and it shall be forgiven you' (cf Matt. 6:14).

212. Every event is like a bazaar. He who knows how to bargain makes a good profit, he who does not makes a loss.

213. If someone does not obey you when you have told him once, do not argue and try to compel him; but take foryourself the profit which he has thrown away. For forbearance will benefit you more than correcting him.

214. When the evil conduct of one person begins to affect others, you should not show long-suffering; and instead ofyour own advantage you should seek that of the others, so that they may be saved. For virtue involving manypeople is more valuable than virtue involving only one.

215. If a man falls into some sin and does not feel remorse for his offence as he should, he will easily fall into thesame net again.

216. Just as a lioness does not make friends with a calf, so impudence does not gladly admit the remorse that accordswith God's will.

217. Just as a sheep does not mate with a wolf, so suffering of the heart does not couple with satiety for theconception of virtues.

218. No one can experience suffering and remorse in a way that accords with God's will, unless he first loves whatcauses them.

219. Fear of God and reproof induce remorse; hardship and vigils make us intimate with suffering.

220. He who does not learn from the commandments and warnings of Scripture will be driven by 'the horse's whip'and 'the ass's goad' (cf. Prov. 26:3. LXX). And if he refuses to obey these as well, his 'mouth must be controlledwith bit and bridle' (Ps. 32:9).

221. He who is easily overcome by the lesser will inevitably be enslaved by the greater. But he who is superior tothe lesser will also with the Lord's help resist the greater.

222. When someone boasts about his virtues, do not try to help him by reproving him. For a man cannot love

showing off and at the same time love the truth.

223. Every word of Christ shows us God's mercy, justice and wisdom and, if we listen gladly, their power enters intous. That is

why the unmerciful and the unjust, listening to Christ with repugnance, were not able to understand the wisdom ofGod, but even crucified Him for teaching it. So we, too, should ask ourselves whether we listen to Him gladly. ForHe said: 'He who loves Me will keep My commandments, and he will be loved by My Father, and I will love him,and will manifest Myself to him' (cf John 14: 21). Do you see how He has hidden His manifestation in thecommandments? Of all the

commandments, therefore, the most comprehensive is to love God and our neighbor.This love is made firm through abstaining from material things, and through stillness of thoughts.

224. Knowing this, the Lord enjoins us 'not to be anxious about the morrow' (Matt. 6:34); and rightly so. For if aman has not freed himself from material things and from concern about them, how can he be freed from evilthoughts? And if he is beset by evil thoughts, how can he see the reality of the sin concealed behind them? Thissin wraps the soul in darkness and obscurity, and increases its hold upon us through our evil thoughts andactions. The devil initiates the whole process by testing a man with a provocation which he is not compelled toaccept; but the man, urged on by self-indulgence and self-esteem, begins to entertain this provocation withenjoyment. Even if his discrimination tells him to reject it, yet in practice he takes pleasure in it and accepts it.If someone has not perceived this general process of sinning, when will he pray about it and be cleansed fromit? And if he has not been cleansed, how will he find purity of nature? And if he has not found this, how will hebehold the inner dwelling-place of Christ? For we are a dwelling-place of God, according to the words ofProphet, Gospel and Apostle (cf Zech. 2:10; John 14:23; 1 Cor. 3:16; Heb. 3:6).

225. Following the sequence just described, we should try to find the dwelling-place and knock with persistentprayer, so that either in this life or at our death the Master may open to us and not say because of ournegligence: 'I do not know where you come from' (Luke 13:25). Not only ought we to ask and receive, but weshould also keep safely what is given; for some people lose what they have received. A theoretical knowledgeor chance experience of these things may perhaps be gained by those who have begun to learn late in life orwho are still young; but the constant and patient practice of these things is barely to be acquired even by devoutand deeply

experienced elders, who have repeatedly lost it through lack of attention and

then through voluntary suffering havesearched for and found it again. So let us constantly imitate them in this, until we, too, have acquired this practiceirremovably.

226. Out of the many ordinances of the spiritual law we have come to understand these] few. The great Psalmistagain and again urges us to learn and practice them as we ceaselessly praise the Lord Jesus. To Him are dueglory, power and worship, both now and through all the ages. Amen.

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Since you have recently become much concerned about your salvation, and have been asking yourself how youcan live a life according to God, you have consulted us and told us about yourself: how with great labor and burningdesire you wished to cleave to God through a strict way of life, through self-control and much hardship, throughvigils and intense prayer. You spoke of the conflicts and the swarm of carnal passions stirred up in our bodily natureand aroused against the soul by the law of sin that fights against the law of our intellect (cf Rom. 7:23). Youdeplored the fact that you are especially troubled by the passions of anger and desire, and you asked for somemethod and words of advice indicating what ascetic practices you should adopt to overcome these two destructivepassions. At that time we talked with you directly and suggested, as far as we could, various ideas to help you,explaining how the soul should engage in ascetic efforts with understanding and spiritual knowledge, in accordancewith the Gospel: and how, living by faith and helped by grace, it can overcome the evils that spring up in the heart,and especially the two passions just mentioned. Our soul should fight most vigorously and continually against thosepassions to which it is especially liable through prepossession and habit, until it has subdued the non-spiritual anduncontrolled operations of vice to which up till now it has been subject; for the soul is carried away captive throughits inward assent to the thoughts with which it is constantly and sinfully occupied.

We are now physically separated from you 'for a short time, in presence but not in heart' (1 Thess. 2:17), for wehave gone to live in the desert with the true ascetics of Christ. It is our hope that we, too, may to some small extentpursue the spiritual way in company with our brethren, who are fighting against the hostile energies and bravelyresisting the passions. We are trying to shake off sloth and

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laxity, to free ourselves from negligence, and to make every effort to conform to God's will. So we have decided towrite you a few words of advice for the benefit of your soul. In this modest letter you will find some of the things wementioned to you in our talk; we ask you to read it carefully, as though we were ourselves present, so that it mayhelp you spiritually.

This, my son, is how you should begin your life according to God. You should continually and unceasingly call tomind all the blessings which God in His love has bestowed upon you in the past, and still bestows for the salvationof your soul. You must not let forgetfulness of evil or laziness make you grow unmindful of these many and greatblessings, and so pass the rest of your life uselessly and ungratefully. For this kind of continual recollection, prickingthe heart like a spur, moves it constantly to confession and humility, to thanksgiving with a contrite soul, and to all

forms of sincere effort, repaying God through its virtue and holiness. In this way the heart meditates constantly andconscientiously on the words from the Psalms; 'What shall I give to the Lord in return for all His benefits towardsme?'(Ps. 116:12).

Thus the soul recalls the blessings of God's love which it has received from the moment it came into existence:how it has often been delivered from dangers: how in spite of having often fallen by its own free choice into greatevils and sins, it was not justly given up to destruction and death at the hands of the spirits of deception: and howGod with long-suffering overlooked its offences and protected it, awaiting its return. It also recalls that althoughthrough the passions it had become the willing servant of hostile and malicious spirits. He sustained it, guarding itand in all ways providing for it: and finally that He guided it with a clear sign to the path of salvation, and inspired itwith the love of the ascetic life. So He gave it the strength gladly to abandon the world and all the deceitfulness ofworldly pleasure, adorning it with the angelic habit of the monastic order, and providing for it to be received by holymen in an organized brotherhood.

Can any man consciously call these things to mind and not be moved always to contrition of heart? Having somany pledges from past blessings, will he not

always have firm hope, in spite of the fact that he himself has so fardone nothing good'? He will say to himself: 'Though I have done nothing good and have committed many sins

before Him, living in uncleanness of the flesh and indulging in many other vices, yet He did not deal with meaccording to my sins, or reward me according to my iniquities (cf Ps. 103:10), but gave me all these gifts of gracefor my salvation. If, then, from now onwards I give myself completely to His service, living in all purity andacquiring the virtues, how many holy and spiritual gifts will He not grant me, strengthening me in every good work,guiding and leading me aright.' If a man always thinks in this way and does not forget God's blessings, heencourages and urges himself on to the practice of every virtue and of every righteous work, always ready, alwayseager to do the will of God.

Therefore, my dear son, since through the grace of Christ you possess natural understanding, continue always tooccupy your mind with such meditation. Do not let yourself be overcome by destructive forgetfulness or by thelaziness which paralyzes the intellect and turns it away from life; do not allow ignorance, the cause of all evils, todarken your thinking; do not be lured by the corrosive vice of negligence; do not be seduced by sensual pleasure ordefeated by gluttony: do not let your intellect be taken prisoner by lust through assenting to sexual thoughts, defilingyourself inwardly: do not be overcome by the anger which causes you to hate your brother and for some patheticreason to inflict and suffer pain, leading you to store up malicious thoughts against your neighbor and to turn awayfrom pure prayer. Anger enslaves the intellect, and makes you regard your brother with bestial cruelty; it fetters theconscience with uncontrolled impulses of the flesh, and surrenders you for a time to be chastised by the evil spiritsto whom you have yielded.

Eventually your intellect, at a loss where to turn, is overwhelmed by dejection and laziness and forfeits all itsspiritual progress. Then in deep humility it sets out once more on the path of salvation. Laboring much in prayer and

all-night vigils, it uproots the causes of evil within itself through humility and confession before God and ourneighbor. In this way it begins to regain the state

of watchfulness and, illumined with divine grace andunderstanding of the Gospels, it perceives that no one can become a true Christian unless he gives himself upcompletely to the cross in a spirit of humility and self-denial, and makes himself lower than all, letting himself betrampled underfoot, insulted, despised, wronged, ridiculed and mocked, and all this he must endure joyfully for theLord's sake, not

claiming for himself in return any human advantages: glory, honor or praise, or the pleasures of food, drink orclothes.

Such are the contests and such the prizes that lie before us. How long, then, shall we mock ourselves bypretending to be devout, serving the Lord with hypocrisy, being thought one thing by men but clearly seen to bequite different by Him who knows our secrets? Other people regard us as saintly, but we are still savage. Althoughwe have indeed an outward form of godliness, we do not possess its power before God (cf 2 Tim. 3:5). Other peopleregard us as virginal and chaste, but in the sight of Him who knows our secrets, we are inwardly defiled by ourassent to thoughts of unchastity, and made filthy by the activity of the passions. In spite of this, thanks to ourseeming asceticism, we attract men's praises and are bowled over and blinded in our intellect.

How long shall we continue in this manner, our intellect reduced to futility, failing to make the spirit of the Gospelour own, not knowing what it means to live according to our conscience, making no serious effort to keep it pure? Lacking real knowledge, we still trust solely in the apparent righteousness of our outward way of life, and so leadourselves astray, trying to please men, pursuing the glory, honor and praise which they offer. But the Judge whocannot be deceived will certainly come, and 'will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness, and reveal thepurposes of hearts' (1 Cor. 4:5). He neither respects the wealthy nor pities the poor, but strips away the outwardappearance and reveals the truth hidden within. In the presence of the angels and before His own Father, He crownsthose who have truly pursued the spiritual way and lived according to their conscience: and in the presence of theheavenly Church of the saints and of

all the celestial hosts. He exposes those who possessed merely an outwardpretence of devotion, which they displayed to men, vainly relying on it and deceiving themselves: and He banishesthem in shame to outer darkness.

Such people are like the foolish virgins (cf. Matt. 25:1-12), who did indeed preserve their outer virginity, yet inspite of this were not admitted to the marriage-feast: they also had some oil in their vessels, that is, they possessedsome virtues and external achievements and some gifts of grace, so that their lamps remained alight for a certaintime. But because of negligence, ignorance and laziness they were not provident, and did not pay careful attention tothe hidden swarm

of passions energized within them by the evil spirits. Their thoughts were corrupted by these hostile energies, whilethey themselves assented to this demonic activity and shared in it. They were secretly enticed and overcome bymalicious envy, by jealousy that hates everything good, by strife, quarrelling, hatred, anger, bitterness, rancor,hypocrisy, wrath, pride, self-esteem, love of popularity, self-satisfaction, avarice, listlessness, by sensual desirewhich provokes images of self-indulgence, by unbelief, irreverence, cowardice, dejection, contentiousness,sluggishness, sleep, presumption, self-justification, pomposity, boastfulness, msatiateness, profligacy, greed, bydespair which is the most dangerous of all, and by the subtle workings of vice. Even the good acts which theyperformed and their life of chastity were all for the sake of being seen and praised by men; and though they had ashare in some gifts of grace, this they sold to the spirits of self-esteem and popularity. Because of their involvementwith the other passions, they mixed their virtues with sinful and worldly thoughts, so rendering them unacceptableand impure, like Cain's sacrifice (cf Gen. 4:5). Thus they were deprived of the joy of the Bridegroom and shut outfrom the heavenly bridal chamber.

Pondering, assessing and testing all this, let us realize our situation and correct our way of life while we still havetime for repentance and conversion. Let us perform our good actions with purity, so that they are really good and notmixed with worldly thoughts: otherwise they will be rejected, like a blemished sacrifice, because of our irreverence,negligence and want of real knowledge. Let

us be careful not to waste our days, lest we undergo all the effort of thelife of virginity - practicing self-control, keeping vigil, fasting, showing hospitality - only to find at the end that,because of the passions we have mentioned, our apparent righteousness, like the blemished sacrifice, provesunacceptable to the heavenly Priest, Christ our God.

Therefore, my son, he who wishes to take up the cross and follow Christ must first acquire spiritual knowledgeand understanding through constantly examining his thoughts, showing the utmost concern for his salvation, andseeking God with all his strength. He should question other servants of God who are of the same mind and engagedin the same ascetic struggle, so that he does not travel in the dark without a light, not knowing how or where towalk. For the

man who goes his own way, traveling without understanding of the Gospels and without any guidance, oftenstumbles and falls into many pits and snares of the devil: he frequently goes astray and exposes himself to manydangers, not knowing where he is going. For many have endured great ascetic labors, much hardship and toil forGod's sake: but because they relied on their own judgment, lacked discrimination, and failed to accept help fromtheir neighbor, their many efforts proved useless and vain.

So then, my beloved son, follow the advice I gave you at the beginning of this letter, and do not let yourself bedragged down unwittingly by vice and laziness, so that you forget the gifts you have received through God's love.Bring before your eyes the blessings, whether physical or spiritual, conferred on you from the beginning of your lifedown to the present, and call them repeatedly to mind in accordance with the words: 'Forget not all His benefits' (Ps.103:2). Then your heart will readily be moved to the fear and love of God, so that you repay Him, as far as you can,by your strict life, virtuous conduct, devout conscience, wise speech, true faith and humility - in short, by dedicatingyour whole self to God. When you are moved by the recollection of all these blessings which you have receivedthrough God's loving goodness, your heart will be spontaneously wounded with longing and love through this recol-lection or, rather, with the help of divine grace, for He has not done for others who are much better than

yourselfsuch miraculous things as in His ineffable love He has done for you.

Try, then, to remember unceasingly all the blessings that have been given to you by God. In particular, alwayskeep in mind that miraculous grace which you told us He conferred on you when you were sailing with your motherfrom the Holy Land to Constantinople. Recall the terrifying and uncontrollable violence of the storm that broke onyou during the night, and how everyone in the ship, including the crew and your mother herself, perished in the sea;and how by an incredible act of divine power you and two others alone were thrown clear of the wreck and escaped.Remember how you came providentially to Ankyra, and how, with fatherly compassion, you were given hospitalityby a certain freeman, and became friends with his devout son Epiphanios. Then both of you, under the guidance of aholy man, entered on the path of salvation, and were received as true sons by the servants of God.

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What repayment for all these blessings can you possibly make to Him who has called your soul to eternal life? Itis only right, then, that you should live no longer for yourself, but for Christ, who died for your sake and rose again.In your struggle to acquire every virtue and to fulfill every commandment, always seek 'the good, acceptable andperfect will of God' (Rom. 12:2), endeavoring with all your strength to pursue it.

Submit your youth to the word of God, my son, and, as this word commands, present your body as 'a livingsacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, for this is your spiritual worship' (Rom. 12:1). Cool and dry up all the moisture ofsensual desire by being content with little, drinking little, and keeping all-night vigils, so that you can say in allsincerity: 'I am become like a wineskin in the frost; yet I have not forgotten Thy ordinances' (Ps. 119:83. LXX).Knowing that you are Christ's, crucify your flesh together with its affections and desires (cf Gal. 5:24). 'Put to deathwhatever is earthly in you' (Col. 3:5), avoiding not only external acts of unchastity, but also the impurity stimulatedin your flesh by evil spirits.

Yet he who hopes to achieve true, undefiled and complete virginity does not stop here. Following the Apostle'steaching, he struggles to put to death every trace and stirring of passion itself. Even so, he is still not entirelysatisfied but he longs

intensely for angelic and undefiled virginity to establish itself in his body. He prays for thedisappearance even of the mere thought of lust, occurring as a momentary disturbance of the intellect, without anymovement and working of bodily passion. A person can achieve this only through the help and power of the HolySpirit - if indeed there is anyone who is counted worthy of this grace.

Thus he who hopes to achieve pure, spiritual and undefiled virginity crucifies the flesh through ascetic labors andputs to death whatever is earthly in him through intense and persistent self-control. He erodes the outer man,refining him, stripping him down to the bone, so that through faith, ascetic effort and the energy of grace the innerman may be 'renewed day by day' (2 Cor. 4:16), advancing to a higher state. He grows in love, is adorned withgentleness, rejoices greatly in spirit, is ruled by the peace of Christ, led by kindness, guarded by goodness, protectedby the fear of God, enlightened by understanding and knowledge, illumined by wisdom, guided by humility. Theintellect, renewed by the Spirit through

these and similar virtues, discovers within itself the imprint of the divine image, and perceives the spiritual andineffable beauty of the divine likeness; and so, learning from itself, it attains the rich wisdom of the inner law.

Therefore, my son, refine the youthful impulses of your flesh, and through the virtues we have describedstrengthen your immortal soul and renew your intellect with the help of the Spirit. For the flesh of youth, gorgedwith food and wine, is like a pig ready for slaughter. The flames of sensual pleasure kill the soul, while the intellectis made a prisoner by the fierce heat of evil desire and cannot then resist such pleasure. For when the blood is heatedthe spirit is cooled.

Young people should particularly avoid drinking wine, and even getting the smell of it. Otherwise the inwardaction of passion and the wine poured in from outside will produce a double conflagration, the combination of thetwo will brmg the flesh's sensual pleasure to boiling point, driving away the spiritual pleasure that accompanies thepain of contrition, and producing confusion and hardness of heart. Indeed, their spiritual desire should prevent theyoung from drinking their fill even of water, for this is a great help towards self-restraint. If

you try this for yourself,experience will show you that it really is so. For in recommending this rule we do not wish to impose on you a yokeof compulsion; but with love we advise it, as an aid in attaining tme virginity and strict self-restraint, leaving it toyour own free choice to do as you wish.

Now let us say something about the senseless passion of anger, which ravages, confuses and darkens every souland, when it is active, makes those in whom it is easily and quickly aroused behave like beasts. This passion isstrengthened particularly by pride, and so long as it is so strengthened it cannot be destroyed. While the diabolicaltree of bitterness, anger and wrath has its roots kept moist by the foul water of pride, it blossoms and thrives andproduces quantities of rotten fruit. Thus the structure of evil in the soul is impossible to destroy so long as it isrooted firmly in pride.

Do you want this tree of disorder - I mean the passion of bitterness, anger and wrath - to dry up within you andbecome barren, so that with the axe of the Spirit it may be 'hewn down and cast into the fire' together with everyother vice (Matt. 3 :10)? Do you want the destruction of this house of evil which the devil builds

in your soul by continually using as stones various plausible or senseless pretexts, whether material or mental, andby constructing its foundations out of thoughts of pride ? If this is what you really want, keep the humility of theLord in your heart and never forget it.

Call to mind who He is; and what He became for our sakes. Reflect first on the sublime light of His Divinityrevealed to the essences above (in so far as they can receive it) and glorified in the heavens by all spiritual beings:angels, archangels, thrones, dominions, principalities, authorities, cherubim and seraphim, and the spiritual powerswhose names we do not know, as the Apostle hints (cf. Eph. 1:21). Then think to what depth of human humiliationHe descended in His ineffable goodness, becoming in all respects like us who were dwelling in darkness and theshadow of death (cf. Isa. 9:2; Matt. 4:16), captives through the transgression of Adam and dominated by the enemythrough the activity of the passions. When we were in this harsh captivity, ruled by invisible and bitter death, theMaster of all visible and invisible creation was not ashamed to humble

Himself and to take upon Himself our humannature, subject as it was to the passions of shame and desire and condemned by divine judgment; and He becamelike us in all things except that He was without sin (cf. Heb. 4:15), that is, without ignoble passions. All the penaltiesimposed by divine judgment upon man for the sin of the first transgression - death, toil, hunger, thirst and the like - He took upon Himself, becoming what we are, so that we might become what He is. The Logos became man, so thatman might become Logos. Being rich. He became poor for our sakes, so that through His poverty we might becomerich (cf. 2 Cor. 8:9). In His great love for man He became like us, so that through every virtue we might become likeHim.

From the time that Christ came to dwell with us, man created according to God's image and likeness is trulyrenewed through the grace and power of the Spirit, attaining to the perfect love which 'casts out fear' (1 John 4:18) -the love which is no longer able to fail, for 'love never fails' (1 Cor. 13:8). Love, says John, is God; and 'he whodwells in love dwells in God' (1 John 4:16). The apostles were granted this love, and so were those who practicedvirtue as they did, offering themselves completely to the Lord, and following Christ with all their heart throughouttheir lifetime.

So you should continually keep in mind the great humiliation[VI] 156

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which the Lord took upon Himself in His ineffable love for us: how the divine Logos dwelt in a womb; how He tookhuman nature upon Himself; His birth from a woman; His gradual bodily growth; the shame He suffered, the insults,vilification, ridicule and abuse; how He was scourged and spat upon, derided and mocked; the scarlet robe, thecrown of thorns; His condemnation by those in power; the outcry of the unruly Jews, men of His own race, againstHim: 'Away with him, away with him, crucify him' (John 19:15); the cross, the nails, the lance, the drink of vinegarand gall; the scorn of the Gentiles; the derision of the passers-by who said: 'If you are the Son of God, come downfrom the cross and we will believe you' (cf Matt. 27:39-42); and the rest of the sufferings which He patiently

accepted for us: crucifixion; death; the three-day burial; the descent into hell. Then keep in mind all that has comefrom these sufferings: the resurrection from the dead; the liberation from hell and from death of those who wereraised with

the Lord; the ascension to the heavens; the enthronement at the right hand of the Father; the honor andglory that is 'far above every principality and power . . . and above every name that is named' (Eph. 1:21); theveneration of the Firstborn from the dead by all the angels, because of the sufferings He had undergone. As theApostle says: 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Though He is in the form of God, He did notinsist on clinging to His equality with God; but He emptied Himself and took upon Himself the form of a servant,and was made in the likeness of man. Being in this likeness. He humbled Himself and became obedient to death,even the death of the cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above everyname, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, things on earth and things under theearth' (Phil. 2:5-10). See to what a height of glory the Lord's human nature was raised up by God's justice throughthese sufferings and humiliations.

If, therefore, you continually recall this with all your heart, the passion of bitterness, anger and wrath will notmaster you. For when the foundations constructed of the passion of pride are sapped through this recalling ofChrist's humiliation, the whole perverse edifice of anger, wrath and resentment automatically collapses. For cananyone keep perpetually in mind the humiliation that the Divinity of the only-begotten Son accepted for our sake,and all the

sufferings that we have mentioned, and yet be so hard and stonyhearted as not to be shattered, humbled and filledwith remorse? Will he not willingly become dust and ashes, trampled underfoot by all men ?

So, when we are humbled and shattered, and keep in mind Christ's humiliation, what anger, wrath or bitternesscan take possession of us? But when forgetfulness of these life-creating truths is accompanied by the sister vices oflaziness and ignorance, then these three oppressive and deep-seated passions of the soul, hard to discover andcorrect, overlay and darken us with a terrible futility. They prepare the way for the rest of the evil passions tobecome active and nest in the soul, stifling its sense of awe, making it neglect what is good, and providing easyaccess and free scope for every passion.

For when the soul has been overlaid by pernicious forgetfulness, by destructive laziness, and by ignorance, themother and nurse of every vice, the afflicted intellect in its blindness is readily enchained by everything that is seen,thought or heard. For instance, when we see a beautiful woman, our intellect is at once wounded by sensual desire.Then we recall what we have seen, heard, or touched with impassioned pleasure in the past, and so our memoryforms sinful images within us. These defile the intellect that is still impassioned and afflicted through the activity ofthe demons of unchastity. Then the flesh, too, if it is well fed, full of youthful spirit, or flabby, is easily roused topassion by such memories, and moved to lust; and it performs acts of uncleanness either in sleep or awake, eventhough it does not have intercourse physically with a woman. Although such a man is regarded by others as chaste,pure and virgin, and may even have the reputation of being a saint, yet he is condemned as defiled, dissolute andadulterous by Him who sees into the secrets of men's hearts. At the Last Day he will justly be condemned, unless hefirst laments and mourns and offers to God worthy repentance, refining his flesh in fasting, vigils and unceasing

prayers, healing and correcting his intellect by meditating on holy themes and on the word of God, in whose sight heconceived or did these evil things. For God says truly to each one of us: 'But I say to you that whoever looks at awoman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart'(Matt. 5:28).

This is why, if possible, it is very helpful for young monks not to[VI] 158

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meet women at all, even though these women are considered saintly. And if they can live in seclusion, the warfarebecomes easier and they can see their own progress more clearly, especially if they confine their attention strictly tothemselves, pursuing their spiritual struggle through abstemiousness, drinking but little water and being greatlyvigilant in prayer. They should make every effort to seek the company of experienced spiritual fathers and to beguided by them. For it is dangerous to isolate oneself completely, relying on one's own judgment with no one else aswitness: and it is equally dangerous to live with those who are inexperienced in spiritual warfare. For then webecome involved in battles of other kinds, because the enemy has many hidden ways of attacking us and sets hissnares around us on every side. Thus a man should try to live with those who possess spiritual knowledge, or at leastto consult them continually, so that even if he is still spiritually immature and childish and does not himself

possessa lamp of true knowledge, he can travel in company with someone who does. Then he will not be walking in thedark, in danger from snares and traps: and he will not fall prey to the demons who prowl like beasts in the dark,seizing and destroying those who grope there without the spiritual lamp of God's word.

If then, my son, you wish to acquire within yourself your own lamp of spiritual light and knowledge, so as to walkwithout stumbling in the dark night of this age: and if you wish your steps to be ordered by the Lord, delighting inthe way of the Gospel - that is, desiring with ardent faith to hold fast to the most perfect gospel commandments, andto share in the sufferings of the Lord through aspirations and prayer - then I will show you a wonderful spiritualmethod to help you achieve this. It does not call for bodily exertion, but requires effort of the soul, control of theintellect, and an attentive understanding, assisted by fear and love of God. Through this method you can easily put toflight the hordes of the enemy, like the blessed David, who through his faith and trust in God destroyed Goliath, thegiant of the Philistines (cf 1 Sam. 17: 45), and with the help of his own people easily put to flight the great host ofthe enemy.

Imagine that there are three powerful and mighty giants of the Philistines, upon whom depends the whole hostilearmy of the demonic Holofemes (cf. Judith 2:4). When these three have been overthrown and slain, all the power ofthe demons is fatally weakened.

These three giants are. the vices already mentioned: ignorance, the source of all evils; forgetfulness, its closerelation and helper; and laziness, which weaves the dark shroud enveloping the soul in murk. This third vicesupports and strengthens the other two, consolidating them so that evil becomes deep-rooted and persistent in thenegligent soul. Laziness, forgetfulness and ignorance in their turn support and strengthen the other passions. Helping

each other, and unable to hold their position apart from one another, they are the mainstay and the chief leaders ofthe devil's army. Through them the whole of this army infiltrates into the soul and is enabled to achieve itsobjectives, which otherwise it could not do.

If then you wish to conquer these three passions and easily to put to flight the

hordes of the demonic Philistines,enter within yourself through prayer and with the help of God. Descend into the depths of the heart, and search outthese three powerful giants of the devil -forgetfulness, laziness and ignorance, the support of the demonic Philistines- which enable the rest of the evil passions to infiltrate and be active, to live and prevail in the hearts of the self-indulgent and in the souls of the unmstructed. Then through strict attention and control of the intellect, together withhelp from above, you will track down these evil passions, about which most men are ignorant, not even suspectingtheir existence, but which are more destructive than all the rest. Take up the weapons of righteousness that aredirectly opposed to them: mmdfulness of God, for this is the cause of all blessings: the light of spiritual knowledge,through which the soul awakens from its slumber and drives out of itself the darkness of ignorance, and true ardor,which makes the soul eager for salvation.

So, through the power of the Holy Spirit, with all prayer and entreaty, you will contend bravely against the threegiants of the demonic Philistines. Through mindfulness of God, you will always reflect on 'whatever is true,whatever is modest, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good report, whatever isholy and deserving of praise' (Phil. 4:8); and in this way you will banish from yourself the pernicious evil offorgetfulness. Through the light of spiritual knowledge you will expel the destructive darkness of ignorance: andthrough your true ardor for all that is good you will drive out the godless laziness that enables evil to root itself inthe soul. When by deep attentiveness and prayer you have acquired these virtues, not only through your ownpersonal

choice, but also through the power of God and with the help of the Holy Spirit, you will be able to deliver yourselffrom the three powerful giants of the devil For when real knowledge, mmdfulness of God's word and true ardor arefirmly established in the soul through active grace and are carefully guarded, the combination of these three expelsfrom the soul and obliterates every trace of forgetfulness, ignorance, and laziness, and henceforth grace reigns

within it, through Christ Jesus our Lord. May He be glorified through all the

ages. Amen.

St. Hesychios The Priest

(? 8th - 9th Century)(Volume l,pp. 161-198)

Introductory Note

St Nikodimos identifies the writer of tlie work that follows. On Watchfulness and Holiness, with Hesychios of Jerusalem,author of many Biblical commentaries, who lived in the first half of the fifth century. But it is today accepted that OnWatchfulness and Holiness is the work of an entirely different Hesychios, who was abbot of the Monastery of the Mother ofGod of the Burning Bush (Vatos) at Sinai. Hesychios of Sinai's date is uncertain. He is probably later than St John Klimakos(sixth or seventh century), with whose book The Ladder of Divine Ascent he seems to be familiar; possibly he lived in the eighthor ninth century. As well as drawing upon Klimakos, he incorporates in his work passages from St Mark the Ascetic and StMaximos the Confessor.'

St Nikodimos commends the work of St Hesychios especially for its teaching on watchfulness, inner attentiveness and theguarding of the heart. Hesychios has a warm devotion to the Holy Name of Jesus, and this makes his treatise of particular valueto all who use the Jesus Prayer.

We have followed the numbering of sections as given in the Greek Philokalia, which differs from that in Migne, PatroloqiaGraeca, xciii.

' For further details, see the footnotes to our translation; and compare J. Kirchmeyer, 'Hesychius le Sinaite et ses Centuries', in Le Millenairedu MontAthos 963-1963. Etudes et Melanges, i (Chevetogne, 1963), pp. 319-29.

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On Watchfulness and HoHness

Written for Theodoulos

1. Watchfulness is a spiritual method which, if sedulously practiced over a long period, completely frees us: withGod's help from impassioned thoughts, impassioned words and evil actions. It leads, in so far as this is possible, to asure knowledge of the inapprehensible God, and helps us to penetrate the divine and hidden mysteries. It enables usto fulfill every divine commandment in the Old and New Testaments and bestows upon us every blessing of the ageto come. It is, in the true sense, purity of heart, a state blessed by Christ when He says: 'Blessed are the pure in heart,for they shall see God' (Matt. 5:8); and one which, because of its spiritual nobility and beauty - or, rather, because ofour negligence - is now extremely rare among monks. Because this is its nature, watchfulness is to be bought only ata great price. But once established in us, it guides us to a true and holy way of life. It teaches us how to activate thethree aspects of our soul correctly, and how to keep a firm guard over the senses. It promotes the daily growth of thefour principal virtues, and is the basis of our contemplation.

2. The great lawgiver Moses - or, rather, the Holy Spirit -indicates the pure, comprehensive and ennoblingcharacter of this virtue, and teaches us how to acquire and perfect ft, when he says:

'Be attentive to yourself, lest there arise in your heart a secret thing which is an iniquity' (Deut. 15:9. LXX). Here thephrase 'a secret thing' refers to the first appearance of an evil thought. This the Fathers call a provocation introducedinto the heart by the devil. As soon as this thought appears in. our intellect, our own thoughts chase after it and enterinto impassioned intercourse with it.

3. Watchfulness is a way embracing every virtue, every[VI] 163

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commandment. It is the heart's stillness and, when free from mental images, it is the guarding of the intellect.

4. Just as a man blind from birth does not see the sun's light, so one who fails to pursue watchfulness does not seethe rich radiance of divine grace. He cannot

free himself from evil thoughts, words and actions, and because of thesethoughts and actions he will not be able freely to pass the lords of hell when he dies.

5. Attentiveness is the heart's stillness, unbroken by any thought. In this stillness the heart breathes and invokes,endlessly and without ceasing, only Jesus Christ who is the Son of God and Himself God. It confesses Him whoalone has power to forgive our sins, and with His aid it courageously faces its enemies. Through this invocationenfolded continually in Christ, who secretly divines all hearts, the soul does everything it can to keep its sweetnessand its inner struggle hidden from men, so that the devil, coming upon it surreptitiously, does not lead it into eviland destroy its precious work.

6. Watchfulness is a continual fixing and. halting of thought at the entrance to the heart. In this way predatory andmurderous thoughts are marked down as they approach and what they say and do is noted; and we can see in whatspecious and delusive form the demons are trying to deceive the intellect. If we are conscientious m this, we cangain much experience and knowledge of spiritual warfare.

7. In one who is attempting to dam up the source of evil thoughts and actions, continuity of watchful attention inthe intellect fat produced by fear of hell and fear of God, by God's withdrawals from the soul, and by the advent oftrials which chasten and instruct. For these withdrawals and unexpected trials help us to correct our life, especiallywhen, having once experienced the tranquility of watchfulness, we neglect it. Continuity of attention produces innerstability; inner stability produces a natural intensification of watchfulness; and this intensification gradually and indue measure gives contemplative insight into spiritual warfare. This in its turn is succeeded by persistence in theJesus Prayer and by the state that Jesus confers in which the intellect, free from all images, enjoys completequietude.

8. When the mind, taking refuge in Christ and calHng upon Him, stands firm and repels its unseen enemies, like awild beast facing a pack of hounds from a good position of defense, then it inwardly

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anticipates their inner ambuscades well in advance. Through continually invoking Jesus the peacemaker againstthem, it remains invulnerable.

9. If you are an adept, initiated into the mysteries and standing before God at dawn (cf. Ps. 5:3), you will divinethe meaning of my words. Otherwise be watchful and you will discover it.

10. Much water makes up the sea. But extreme watchfulness and the Prayer of Jesus Christ, undistracted bythoughts, are the necessary basis for inner vigilance and unfathomable stillness of soul, for the deeps of secret andsingular contemplation, for the humility that knows and assesses, for rectitude and love. This watchfulness and thisPrayer must be intense, concentrated and unremitting.

11. It is written: 'Not everyone who says to Me: "Lord, Lord" shall enter into the kmgdom of heaven: but he thatdoes the will of My Father' (Matt. 7:21). The will of the Father is indicated in the words: 'You who love the Lord,hate evil' (Ps. 97:10). Hence we should both pray the Prayer of Jesus Christ and hate our evil thoughts. In this waywe do God's will.

12. Through His incarnation God gave us the model for a holy life and recalled us from our ancient fall. Inaddition to many other things. He taught us, feeble as we are, that we should fight against the demons with humility,fasting, prayer and watchfulness. For when, after His baptism. He went into the desert and the devil came up to Himas though He were merely a man. He began His spiritual warfare by fasting and won the battle by this means -though, being God, and God of gods. He had no need of any such means at all.

13.1 shall now tell you in plain, straightforward language what I consider to be the types of watchfulness whichgradually cleanse the intellect from impassioned thoughts. In these times of spiritual warfare I have no wish toconceal beneath words whatever in this treatise may be of use, especially to more simple people. As St Paul puts it:'Pay attention, my child Timothy, to what you read' (cf. 1 Tim. 4:13).

14. One type of watchfulness consists in closely scrutinizmg every mental image or provocation: for only bymeans of a mental image can Satan fabricate an evil thought and insinuate this into the intellect in order to lead itastray.

15. A second type of watchfulness consists in freeing the heart from all thoughts, keeping it profoundly silent andstill, and in praying.

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16. A third type consists in continually and humbly calling upon the Lord Jesus Christ for help.

17. A fourth type is always to have the thought of death in one's mind.

18. These types of watchfulness, my child, act like doorkeepers and bar entry to evil thoughts. Elsewhere, if Godgives me words, I shall deal more fully with a farther type which, along with the others, is also effective: this is tofix one's gaze on heaven and to pay no attention to anything material.

19. When we have to some extent cut off the causes of the passions, we should devote our time to spiritualcontemplation: for if we fail to do this we shall easily revert to the fleshly passions, and so achieve nothing but thecomplete darkening of our intellect and its reversion to material things.

20. The man engaged in spiritual warfare should simultaneously possess humility, perfect attentiveness, the powerof rebuttal, and prayer. He should possess humility because, as his fight is against the arrogant demons, he will thenhave the help of Christ in his heart, for 'the Lord hates the arrogant' (cf Prov. 3:34. LXX). He should possessattentiveness in order always to keep his heart clear of all thoughts, even of those that appear to be good. He shouldpossess the power of rebuttal so that, whenever he recognizes the devil, he may at once repulse him angrily: for it iswritten: 'And 1 shall reply to those who vilify me; will not my soul be subject to God?' (Pss. 119:42; 62:1. LXX). Heshould possess prayer so that as soon as he has rebutted the devil he may call to Christ with 'cries that cannot beuttered' (Rom. 8:26). Then he will see the devil broken and; routed by the venerable name of Jesus — will see himand his dissimulation scattered like dust or smoke before the wind.

21. If we have not attained prayer that is free from thoughts, we have no weapon to fight with. By this prayer Imean the prayer which is ever active in the inner shrine of the soul, and which by invoking Christ scourges andsears our secret enemy.

22. The glance of your intellect should be quick and keen, able to perceive the invading demons. When youperceive one, you should at once rebut it, crushing it like the head of a serpent. At the same time, call imploringly toChrist, and you will experience God's unseen help. Then you will clearly discern the heart's rectitude.

23. Just as someone in the midst of a crowd, holding a mirror

and looking at it, sees not only his own face but also the faces of those looking in the mirror with him, so someonewho looks into his own heart sees in it not only his own state, but also the black faces of the demons.

24. The intellect cannot conquer a demonic fantasy by its own unaided powers, and should never attempt to do so."The demons are a sly lot: they pretend to be overcome and then trip us up by filling us with self-esteem. But whenwe call upon Jesus Christ, they do not dare to play their tricks with us even for a second.

25. Do not become conceited like the ancient Israelites, and so betray yourself into the hands of your spiritualenemies. For the Israelites, liberated from the Egyptians by the God of all, devised a molten idol to help them (cf.Exod. 32:4).

26. The molten idol denotes our crippled intellect. So long as the intellect invokes Jesus Christ against thedemons, it easily routs them, putting their invisible forces to flight with the skill bom of knowledge. But when itstupidly places all its confidence in itself, it falls headlong like a hawk. For it is written: 'My heart has trusted in Godand I am helped: and my flesh flowers again' (Ps. 28:7. LXX); and 'Who but the Lord will rise up for me and standwith me against

the host of wicked droughts?' (cf. Ps. 94:16). Whoever places his confidence in himself and not inGod will indeed fall headlong.

27. If you wish to engage in spiritual warfare, let that little animal, the spider, always be your example for stillnessof heart; otherwise you will not be as still in your intellect as you should be. The spider hunts small flies; but youwill continually slay 'the children of Babylon' (cf. Ps. 137:9) if during your struggle you are as still in your soul as isthe spider; and, in the course of this slaughter, you will be blessed by the Holy Spirit.

28. It is impossible to find the Red Sea among the stars or to walk this earth without breathing air; so too it isimpossible to cleanse our heart from impassioned thoughts and to expel its spiritual enemies without the frequentinvocation of Jesus Christ.

29. Be watchful as you travel each day the narrow but joyous and exhilarating road of the mind, keeping yourattention humbly in your heart, reproaching yourself, ready to rebut your enemies, thinking of your death andinvoking Jesus Christ. You will then attain a vision of the Holy of Holies and be illumined by Christ with deepmysteries. For in Christ 'the treasures of wisdom and know-

ledge' are hidden, and in Him 'the fuUness of the Godhead dwells bodily' (Col. 2:3, 9). In the presence of Christ youwill feel the Holy Spirit, spring up withm your soul. It is the Spirit who initiates man's intellect, so that it can seewith 'unveiled face' (2 Cor. 3:18). For 'no one can say "Lord Jesus" except in the Holy Spirit' (1 Cor. 12:3). In otherwords, it is the Spirit who mystically confirms Christ's presence in us.

30. Those who love true knowledge should also be aware that the demons in their jealousy sometimes hidethemselves and cease from open spiritual battle. Begrudging us the benefit, knowledge and progress towards Godthat we derive from the battle, they try to make us careless so that they can suddenly capture

our mtellect and againreduce our mind to inattention. Their unremitting purpose is to prevent the heart from being attentive, for they knowhow greatly such attentiveness enriches the soul. We on the contrary, through remembrance of our Lord JesusChrist, should redouble our efforts to achieve spiritual contemplation; and then the intellect again finds itselfengaged in battle. Let all we do be done with great humility and only, if I may put it like this, with the will of theLord Himself.

31. We who live in coenobitic monasteries should of our own free choice gladly cut off our whole will throughobedience to the abbot. In this way, with God's help, we shall become to some degree tractable and free from self-will. It is good to acquire this art, for then our bile will not be aroused and we shall not excite our mcensive powerunnaturally and uncontrollably, and so be deprived of communion with God in our unseen warfare. If we do notvoluntarily cut off our self-will, it will become enraged with those .who try to compel us to cut it off; and then ourincensive power will become abusively aggressive and so destroy that knowledge of the warfare which we havegained only after great effort. The incensive power by nature is prone to be destructive. If it is turned againstdemonic thoughts it destroys them; but if it is roused against people it then destroys the good thoughts that are in us.In other words, the incensive power, although God-given as a weapon, or, a bow against evil thoughts, can be turnedthe other way and used to destroy good thoughts as well, for it destroys whatever it is directed against. I have seen aspirited dog destroying equally both wolves and sheep.

32. We should shun loose speech like an asp's venom and too[VI] 168

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much company like a 'progeny of vipers' (Matt. 3:7), for it can plunge us into total forgetfulness of the inner struggleand bring the soul down from the heights of the joy that purity of heart gives us. This accursed forgetfulness is asopposed to attentiveness as water to fire, and forcibly fights against it all the time. Forgetfulness leads to negligence,and negligence to indifference, laziness and unnatural desire. In this way we return to where we started, like a dog to

his own vomit (cf 2 Pet. 2:22). So let us shun loose speech like deadly poison. As for forgetfulness and all itsconsequences, they can be cured by the most strict guarding of the intellect and by the constant invocation of ourLord Jesus Christ. For without Him, we can do nothing (cf. John 15:5).

33. One cannot befriend a snake and carry it about in one's shirt, or attain holiness while pampering andcherishing the body above its needs. It is the snake's nature to bite whoever tends it, and the body's to defile withsensual pleasure whoever indulges it. When it offends, the body should be whipped mercilessly like a drunkenrunaway slave: it should taste the Lord's scourge. Slavish nocturnal thing of perishable clay that it is, there must beno dallying allowed it: it must be made to recognize its tnie and imperishable mistress. Until you leave this world,do not trust the flesh. 'The will of the flesh,' it is said, 'is hostile to God: for it is not subject to the law of God. Theflesh desires against the Spirit. They that are in the flesh cannot conform to God's will; but we are not in the flesh,but m the Spirit' (cf Rom. 8:7-9; Gal. 5:17).

34. The task of moral judgment is always to prompt the soul's mcensive power to engage in inner warfare and tomake us self-critical. The task of wisdom is to prompt the intelligence to strict watchfulness, constancy, and spiritualcontemplation. The task of righteousness is to direct the appetitive aspect of the soul towards holiness and towardsGod. Fortitude's task is to govern the five senses and to keep them always under control, so that through themneither our inner self, the heart, nor our outer self, the body,-is defiled.

35. 'His majesty is upon Israel' (Ps. 68:34. LXX) - that is, upon the intellect that beholds, so far as this is possible,the beauty of the glory of God Himself. 'And His strength is in the clouds' (ibid.), that is, in radiant souls that gazetowards the dawn. In such souls it reveals the Beloved, He who sits at the right hand of God

and floods them with light as the sun's rays flood the white clo

36. A single sinner, say* the Holy Scripture, destroys much righteousness (cf. Eccles. 9:18); while an intellect thatsins loses its heavenly food and drmk (cf Eccles. 9:7).

37. We are not mightier than Samson, wiser than Solomon, more knowledgeable about God than David, and wedo not love God better than did Peter, prince of the apostles. So let us not have confidence in ourselves; for he whohas confidence in himself will fall headlong.

38. Let us learn humility from Christ, humiliation from David, and from Peter to shed tears over what hashappened; but let us also learn to avoid the despair of Samson, Judas, and that wisest of men, Solomon.

39. The devil, with all his powers, 'walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour' (1 Pet. 5:8). Soyou must never relax your attentiveness of heart, your watchfulness, your power of rebuttal or your prayer to JesusChrist our God. You will not find a greater help than Jesus in all your life, for He alone, as God, knows the deceitful

ways of the demons, their subtlety and their guile.

40. Let your soul, then, trust in Christ, let it call on Him and never fear: for it fights, not alone, but with the aid ofa mighty King, Jesus Christ, Creator of all that is, both bodiless and embodied, visible and invisible.

41. The more the rain falls on the earth, the softer it makes it: similarly, Christ's holy name gladdens the earth ofour heart the more we call upon it.

42. Those who lack experience should know that it is only through the unceasing watchfulness of our intellect andthe constant invocation of Jesus Christ, our Creator and God, that we, coarse and cloddish in mind and body as weare, can overcome our bodiless and invisible enemies: for not only are they subtle, swift, malevolent and skilled inmalice, but they have an experience in warfare gamed over all the years since Adam. The mexperienced have asweapons the Jesus Prayer and the impulse to test and discern what is from God. The experienced have the bestmethod and teacher of all: the activity, discernment and peace of God Himself.

43. Just as a child, young and guileless, delights in seeing a

conjuror and in his innocence follows him about, so our soul, simple and good because created thus by its Master,delights in the delusive provocations of the devil. Once deceived it pursues something sinister as though it weregood, just as a dove is lured away by the enemy of her children. In this way its thoughts become entwined in thefantasy provoked by the devil, whether this happens to be the face of a beautiful woman or some other thingforbidden by the commandments of Christ. Then, seeking to contrive some means through which it can actuallyattain what attracts it, the soul assents to the provocation and, to its own condemnation, turns this unlawful mentalfantasy into a concrete, action by means of the body.

44. Such is the cunning of the evil one, and with these arrows he poisons every soul. It is therefore not safe toallow these thoughts to enter the heart in order to increase the intellect's experience of warfare, especially to startwith, when the soul still greatly enjoys these demonic provocations and delights in pursuing them. But as soon as weperceive them, we should counter-attack and repulse them. Once the intellect has matured in this excellent activity,it is disciplined and perceptive. From then on it is unceasingly engaged in the battle of perceiving in their true lightthese 'little foxes', as the Prophet calls them (S. of S. 2:15), and it easily lays hold of them. Only when we have suchknowledge and experience should we admit them and censure them.

45. Just as it is impossible for fire and water to pass through the same pipe together, so it is impossible for sin toenter the heart without first knocking at its door in the form of a fantasy provoked by the devil.

46. The provocation comes first, then our coupling with it, or the mingling of our thoughts with those of thewicked demons. Third comes our assent to the provocation, with both sets of intermingling thoughts contriving how

to commit the sin in practice. Fourth comes the concrete action - that is, the sin itself. If, however, the inteUect isattentive and watchful, and at once repulses the provocation by counter-attacking and gainsaying it and invoking theLord Jesus, its consequences remain inoperative, for the devil, being a bodiless intellect, can

deceive our souls onlyby means of fantasies and thoughts. David was speaking about these provocations of the devil when he said: 'Earlyin the morning I destroyed all the wicked of the earth, that I might cut off all evildoers

from the city of the Lord' (Ps 101:8. LXX); and Moses was [Vl] 171

referring to the act of assent to a provocation in his words: 'You Cf fTesvchioS the

shall make no covenant with them, nor with their gods' (Exod.

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47. Intellect is invisibly interlocked m battle with intellect, the

demonic intellect with our own. So from the depths of our heart we must at each instant call on Christ to drive thedemonic intellect away from us and in His compassion give us the victory.

48. Let your model for stillness of heart be the man who holds a mirror into which he looks. Then you will seeboth good and evil imprinted on your heart.

49. See that you never have a single thought in your heart, whether senseless or sensible; then you can easilyrecognize that alien tribe, the firstborn sons of the Egyptians.

50. Watchfulness is a graceful and radiant virtue when guided by Thee, Christ our God, and accompanied by thealertness and deep humility of the human intellect. Its branches reach to the seas and to deep abysses ofcontemplation, its shoots to the rivers of the beauteous and divine mysteries (cf Ps. 80:11). Again, it cleanses theintellect consumed in ungodliness by the brine of demonic thoughts and the hostile will of the flesh, which is death(cf Rom. 8:6-8).

51. Watchfulness is like Jacob's ladder: God is at the top while the angels climb it. It rids us of everything bad,cuts out loose chatter, abuse, backbiting, and all other evil practices of this kind. Yet in doing this, not for an instantdoes it lose its own sweetness.

52. We should zealously cultivate watchfulness, my brethren: and when - our mind purified in Christ Jesus - weare exalted by the vision it confers, we should review our sins and our former life, so that shattered and humbled atthe thought of them We may never lose the help of Jesus Christ our God in the invisible battle. If because of pride,self-esteem or self-love we are depri\'ed of Jesus' help, we shall lose that purity of heart through which God isknown to man. For, as the Beatitude states, purity of heart is the ground for the vision of God (cf. Matt. 5:8).

53. An intellect that does not neglect its inner struggle will find that - along with the other blessings which comefrom always keeping a guard on the heart - the five bodily senses, too, are freed from all external evil influences. Forwhile the intellect is wholly

attentive to its own virtue and watchfulness and longs to enjoy holy thoughts, it does not allow itself to be plunderedand carried away when vain material thoughts approach it through the senses. On the contrary, recognizing thewiliness of these thoughts, it withdraws the senses almost completely into itself.

54. Guard your mind and you will not be harassed by temptations. But if you fail to guard it, accept patientlywhatever trial comes.

55. Just as the bitterness of absinth helps a poor appetite, so misfortunes help a bad character.

56. If you do not want to suffer evil, do not inflict it, since the suffering of it inevitably follows its infliction. 'Forwhatever a man sows he will also reap' (Gal. 6:7). Reaping unwillingly the wickedness we deliberately sow, weshould marvel at God's justice.

57. The intellect is made blind by these three passions: avarice, self-esteem and sensual pleasure.

58. These three passions on their own dull spiritual knowledge and faith, the foster-brothers of our nature.

59. It is because of them that wrath, anger, war, murder and all other evils have such power over mankind.

60. He who does not know the truth cannot truly have faith; for by nature knowledge precedes faith. What is saidin Scripture is said not solely for us to understand, but also for us to act upon.

61. We should therefore set about our task, for by doing so and advancing steadily we will find that hope in God,sure faith, inner knowledge, release from temptations, gifts of grace, heart-felt confession and prolonged tears cometo the faithful through prayer. For not only these blessings, but the patient acceptance of affliction, sincereforgiveness of our neighbor, knowledge of the spiritual law, the discovery of God's justice, frequent visitations ofthe Holy Spirit, the giving of spiritual treasures and all that God has promised to bestow to men of faith now and inthe future age - in short, the manifestation of the soul in accordance with the image of God — can come onlythrough God's grace and man's faith when, he guards his mind with great humility and undistracted prayer.

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62. We have learned from experience that for one who wishes to purify his heart it is a tmly great blessingconstantly to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus against his intelligible enemies. Notice how what I speak of fromexperience concurs with the testimony of Scripture. It is written: 'Prepare yourself, O Israel, to call upon the name ofthe Lord your God' (cf Amos 4:12. LXX): and the Apostle says: 'Pray without ceasing' (1 Thess. 5:17). Our LordHimself says: 'Without Me you can do nothing. If a man dwells in Me, and I in him, then he brings forth much fruit';and agam: 'If a man does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch' (John 15:5-6). Prayer is a great blessing, and itembraces all blessings, for it purifies the heart, in which God is seen by the believer.

63. Because humility is by nature something that exalts, something loved by God which destroys in us almost allthat is evil and hateful to Him, for this reason it is difficult to attain. Even if you can easily find someone who tosome extent practices a number of virtues, you will hardly find the odor of humility in him, however you search forit. It is something that can be acquired only with much diligence. Indeed, Scripture refers to the devil as 'unclean'because from the beginning he rejected humility and espoused arrogance. As a result he is called an unclean spiritthroughout the Scriptures. For what bodily uncleanliness could one who is completely without body, fleshless andweightless, bring about in himself so as to be called 'unclean'' as a result? Clearly he was called unclean because ofhis arrogance, defiling himself thus after having been a pure and radiant angel. 'Everyone that is arrogant is uncleanbefore the Lord' (Prov. 16:5. LXX), for it is written that the first sin was arrogance (cf. Ecclus. 10:13). And it was inarrogance that Pharaoh said: 'I, do not know the Lord, neither will I let Israel go' (Exod. 5:2).

64. If we are concerned with our salvation, there are many things the intellect can do in order to secure for us theblessed gift of humility. For example, it can recollect the sins we have committed in word, action and thought; andthere are many other things which, reviewed in contemplation, contribute to our humility. True humility is alsobrought about by meditating daily on the achievements of our brethren, by extolling their natural superiorities andby comparing our gifts with theirs. When the intellect sees in this way how worthless we are and how far we fallshort of the perfection

of our brethren, we will regard ourselves as dust and ashes, and not as men but as some kmd of cur, more defectivein every respect and lower than all men on earth.

65. St Basil the Great, mouthpiece of Christ and pillar of the Church, says that a great help towards not sinningand not committing daily the same faults is for us to review in our conscience at the end of each day what we havedone wrong and

what we have done right. Job did this with regard both to himself and to his children (cf Job 1:5).These daily reckonings illumine a man's hour by hour behavior.

66. Someone else wise in the thmgs of God has said that as the fruit begins with the flower, so the practice of theascetic life begins with self-control. Let us then learn to control ourselves with due measure and judgment, as theFathers teach us. Let us pass all the hours of the day in the guarding of the intellect, for by doing this we shall withGod's help and with a certain forcefulness be able to quell and reduce the evil in us. For the spiritual life, through

which the kingdom of heaven is given, does indeed require a certain forcefulness (cf. Matt. 11:12).67. Dispassion and humility lead to spiritual knowledge. Without them, no one can see God.

68. He who always concentrates on the inner life will acquire self-restraint. He will also be able to contemplate,theologize and pray. This is what the Apostle meant when he said: 'Walk in the Spirit, and you will not fulfill thedesire of the flesh' (Gal. 5:16).

69. One ignorant of the spiritual path is not on his guard against his impassioned thoughts, but devotes himselfentirely to the flesh. He is either a glutton, or dissipated, or full of resentment, anger and rancor. As a result, hedarkens his intellect, or he practices excessive asceticism and so confuses his mind.

70. He who has renounced such things as marriage, 'possessions and other worldly pursuits is outwardly a monk,but may not yet be a monk inwardly. Only he who has renounced the impassioned thoughts of his inner self, whichis the intellect, is a true monk. It is

easy to be a monk in one's outer self if one wants to be: but no small struggle is required to be a monk in one's innerself

71. Who in this generation is completely free from impassioned thoughts and has been granted uninterrupted,pure, and spiritual prayer? Yet this is the mark of the inner monk.

72. Many passions are hidden in the soul; they can be checked only when their causes are revealed.

73. Do not devote all your time to your body but apply to it a measure of asceticism appropriate to its strength andthen turn all your intellect to what is within. 'Bodily asceticism has only a limited use, but true devotion is useful inaU things'(1 Tim. 4:8).

74. We grow proud when the passions cease to be active in us, and this whether they are inactive because theircauses have been eradicated or because the demons have deliberately withdrawn in. order to deceive us.

75. Humility and ascetic hardship free a man from all sin, for the one cuts out the passions of the soul, the otherthose of the body. It is for this reason that the Lord says: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Matt.5:8). They shall see God and the riches that are in Him when they have purified themselves through love and self-control; and the greater their purity, the more they will see.

76. David's watchman prefigures the circumcision of the heart; for the guarding of the intellect is a watchtowercommanding a view over our whole spiritual life (cf. 2 Sam. 18:24).

77. Just as in the world of the senses we are harmed when we see something harmful, so in the world of theintellect the same is true.

78. Just as someone who wounds the heart of a plant withers it completely, so too sin, when it wounds a man'sheart, withers it completely. We must watch for such moments, because brigands are always at work.

79. Wishing to show that to fulfill every commandment is a duty, whereas sonship is a gift given to men throughHis own Blood, the Lord said, 'When you have done all that is commanded you, say: "We are useless servants: wehave only done what was our duty" (Luke 17:10). Thus the kingdom of heaven is not a reward for works, but a giftof grace prepared by the Master for His faithful servants. A slave does not demand his freedom as a reward: but he

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gives thanks as one who is in debt, and he receives freedom as a gift.

80. 'Christ died on account of our sins in accordance with the Scriptures' (1 Cor. 15:3); and to those who serveHim well He gives freedom. 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' He says, 'you have been faithful over a fewthings, I will make you ruler over many things: enter into the joy of your Lord' (Matt. 25: 21). He who relies ontheoretical knowledge alone is not yet a faithful servant: a faithful servant is one who expresses his faith in Christthrough obedience to His commandments.

81. He who honors the Lord does what the Lord bids. When he sins or is disobedient, he patiently accepts whatcomes as something he deserves. If you love true knowledge, devote yourself to the ascetic life; for mere theoreticalknowledge puffs a man up (cf 1 Cor. 8:1).

82. Unexpected trials are sent by God to teach us to practice the ascetic life.

83. Light is the property of a star, as simplicity and humility are the property of a holy and God-fearing man.Nothing distinguishes more clearly the disciples of Christ than a humble spirit and a simple way of life. The fourGospels shout this aloud. Whoever has not lived in this humble manner is deprived of his share in Him who'humbled Himself... to death, even the death of the cross' (Phil. 2:8), the actual Lawgiver of the divine Gospels.

84. It is said that those who thirst should go to the waters (cf. Isa. 55:1). Those who thirst for God should go inpurity of mind. But he who through such purity soars aloft should also keep an eye on the earth of his own lowlinessand simplicity, for no one is more exalted than he who is humble. Just as when light is absent, all things are dark and

gloomy, so when humility is absent, all our efforts to please God are vain and pointless.

85. 'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments' (Eccles. 12:13), bothwhere the intellect and where the senses are concerned. If you force yourself to keep the commandments on theplane of the intellect, you will seldom need great effort to keep those that refer to the senses. In the words of Davidthe Prophet, 'I wished to carry out Thy will and Thy law in my inward parts' (cf. Ps. 40:8. LXX).

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86. If a man does not carr)' out the will and law of God 'in his inward parts', that is, in his heart, he will not beable to carry them out easily in the outward sphere of the senses either. The careless and unwatchful man will say toGod: 'I do not want to know Thy ways' (Job 21:14. LXX), obviously because he lacks divine illummation. But hewho participates in that light will be confident and steadfast in matters that concern God.

87. Just as salt seasons our bread and other food and keeps certain meats from spoiling for quite a time, so thespiritual sweetness and marvelous working which result from the guarding of the intellect effect something similar.For in a divine manner they season and sweeten both the inner and the outer self, driving away the stench of evilthoughts and keeping us continually in communion with good thoughts.

88. Many of our thoughts come from demonic provocation, and from these derive our evil outward actions. If withthe help of Jesus we instantly quell the thought, we will avoid its corresponding outward action. We will enrichourselves with the sweetness of divine knowledge and so will find God, who is everywhere. Holding the mirror ofthe intellect firmly towards God, we will be illumined constantly as pure glass is by the sun. Then the intellect,havmg reached the term of its desires, will in Him cease from all other contemplation.

89. Because every thought enters the heart in the form of a mental image of some sensible object, the blessed lightof the Divinity will illumine the heart only when the heart is completely empty of everythmg and so free from allform.

Indeed, this light reveals itself to the pure intellect in the measure to which the intellect is purged of allconcepts.

90. The more closely attentive you are to your mind, the greater the longing with which you will pray to Jesus;and the more carelessly you examine your mind, the farther you will separate yourself from. Him. Just as closeattentiveness brilliantly illumines the mind, so the lapse from watchfulness and from the sweet invocation Jesus willdarken it completely. All this happens naturally, not in any other way; and you will experience it if you test it out inpractice. For there is no virtue - least of all this blessed light-generating activity - which cannot be learnt fromexperience.

91. To invoke Jesus continually with a sweet longing is to fill[VI] 178

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the heart in its great attentiveness with joy and tranquihty. But it is Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Himself God,cause and creator of all blessings, who completely purifies the heart; for it is written: 'I am God who makes peace'(cf Isa^ 45:7).

92. The soul that is being given blessings and sweetness by Jesus repays her Benefactor by offering thanks to Himwith a certain exultation and love; joyfully and gratefully she calls upon Him who gives her peace, and with the eyesof the intellect she sees Him within herself destroying the demonic fantasies.

93. 'My spiritual eyes have looked upon my spiritual enemies,' says David the Prophet, 'and my ear shall hearthose who in their wickedness rise up against me' (cf. Ps. 92:11. LXX). And again: 'I have seen God's requital ofsinners take place within me' (cf. Ps. 91:8). When there are no fantasies or mental images in the heart, the intellect isestablished in its true nature, ready to contemplate whatever is full of delight, spiritual and close to God.

94. Watchfulness and the Jesus Prayer, as I have said, mutually reinforce one another; for close attentiveness goeswith constant prayer, while prayer goes with close watchfulness and attentiveness of intellect.

95. The unremitting remembrance of death is a powerful trainer of body and

soul'. Vaulting over all that liesbetween ourselves and death, we should always visualize it, and even the very bed on which we shall breathe ourlast, and everything else connected with it.

96. If you want never to be wounded, do not succumb to sleep. There are only two choices: to fall and bedestroyed, stripped of all virtue; or, armed with the intellect, to stand firm through everything. For the enemy and hishost stand always ready for battle.

97. A certain God-given equilibrium is produced in our intellect through the constant remembrance andinvocation of our Lord Jesus Christ, provided that we do not neglect this constant spiritual entreaty or our closewatchfulness and diligence. Indeed, our true task is always the same and is always accomplished in the same way: tocall upon our Lord Jesus Christ with a burning heart so that His holy name intercedes for us. In virtue as in vice,constancy is the mother of habit; once acquired, it rules us like nature. When the intellect is in such a state ofequilibrium, it searches out its enemies like a hound searching for a hare in a thicket. But the hound searches inorder to get food, the intellect in order to destroy.

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98. Whenever we are filled with evil thoughts, we should throw the invocation of our Lord Jesus Christ into theirmidst. Then, as experience has taught us, we shall see them instantly dispersed like smoke in the air. Once theintellect is left to itself again, we can renew our constant attentiveness and our invocation. Whenever we are

distracted, we should act in this way.

99. Just as it is impossible to fight battles without weapons, or to swim a great sea with clothes on, or to livewithout breathing, so without humility and the constant prayer to Christ it is impossible to master the art of inwardspiritual warfare or to set about it and pursue it skillfully.

100. That great spiritual master David said to the Lord: 'I shall preserve my strength through Thee' (cf. Ps. 59:9LXX). So the strength of the heart's stillness, mother of all the virtues, is preserved in us through our being helpedby the Lord. For He has given us the commandments, and when we call upon Him constantly He expels from us thatfoul forgetfulness which destroys the heart's stillness as water destroys fire. Therefore, monk, do not 'sleep untodeath" (Ps. 13:3. LXX) because of your negligence; but lash the enemy with the name of Jesus and, as a certain wiseman has said, let the name of Jesus adhere to your breath, and then you will know the blessings of stillness.

101. When in fear, trembling and unworthiness we are yet permitted to receive the divine, undefiled Mysteries ofChrist, our King and our God, we should then display even greater watchfulness, strictness and guard over ourhearts, so that the divine fire, the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, may consume our sins and stains, great and smallFor when that fire enters into us, it at once drives the evil spirits from our heart and remits the sins we havepreviously committed, leaving the intellect free from the turbulence of wicked thoughts. And if after this, standing atthe entrance to our heart, we keep strict watch over the mtellect, when we ace again permitted to receive thoseMysteries the divine body will illumine our intellect still more and make it shine like a star.

102. Forgetfulness can extinguish our guard over our intellect as water extinguishes fire; but the continuousrepetition of the

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Jesus Prayer combined with strict watchfulness uproots it from our heart. The Jesus Prayer requires watchfulness asa lantern requires a candle.

103. We should strive to preserve the precious gifts which preserve us from all evil, whether on the plane of thesenses or on that of the intellect. These gifts are the guarding of the intellect with the invocation of Jesus Christ,continuous insight into the heart's depths, stillness of mind unbroken even by thoughts which appear to be good, andthe capacity to be empty of all thought. In this way

the demons will not steal in undetected; and if we suffer painthrough remaining centered in the heart, consolation is at hand.

104. The heart which is constantly guarded, and is not allowed to receive the forms, images and fantasies of thedark and evil spirits, is conditioned by nature to give birth from within itself to thoughts filled with light. For just ascoal engenders a flame, or a flame lights a candle, so will God, who from our baptism dwells in our heart, kindle ourmind to contemplation when He finds it free from the winds of evil and protected by the guarding of the intellect.

105. The name of Jesus should be repeated over and over in the heart as flashes of lightning are repeated over andover in the sky before rain. Those who have experience of the intellect and of inner warfare know this very well. We

should wage this spiritual warfare with a precise sequence: first, with attentiveness; then, when we perceive thehostile thought attacking, we should strike at it angrily in the heart, cursing it as we do so: thirdly, we should directour prayer against it, concentrating the heart through the invocation of Jesus Christ, so that the demonic fantasy maybe dispersed at once, the intellect no longer pursuing it like a child deceived by some conjuror.

106. Let us exert ourselves like David, crying out 'Lord Jesus Christ" until our throats are sore; and let our spiritualeyes never cease to give us hope in the Lord our God (cf Ps. 69:3).

107. If we constantly bear in mind the parable of the unjust judge, which the Lord related in order to show us thatwe ought always to pray and not to lose heart, we shall both profit and be vindicated (cf. Luke 18:1-8).

108. Just as he who looks at the sun cannot but fill his eyes with light, so he who always gazes intently into hisheart cannot fail to be illumined.

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109. Just as it is impossible to live this present life without eating or drmking, so it is impossible for the soul toachieve anythmg spiritual and in accordance with God's will, or to be free from mental sin, without that guarding ofthe intellect and purity of heart truly described as watchfulness; and this is so even if one forces oneself not to sinthrough the fear of punishment.

110. Nevertheless, those who force themselves to refrain from active sin are blessed by God, angels and men; forthey take the kingdom of God by force (cf Matt. 11:12).

111. The intellect's great gain from stillness is this: all the sins which formerly beat upon the intellect as thoughtsand which, once admitted by the mind, were turned into outward acts of sin, are now cut off by mental watchfulness.For, with the help of our Lord Jesus Christ, this watchfulness does not allow these sins to enter our inner self and soto burgeon into outward acts of evil.

112.' The Old Testament is an icon of outward bodily asceticism. The Holy Gospel, or New Testament, is an iconof attentiveness, that is, of purity of heart. For the Old Testament did not perfect or fulfill the relationship of theinner self to God - 'the law made no one perfect', as the Apostle says (cf. Heb. 7:19) - it simply forbade bodily sins.But to cut off evil thoughts from the heart, as the Gospel commands, contributes much more to purity of soul than aninjunction against putting out. a neighbor's eye or knocking out his teeth. Similarly, it contributes more than otherbodily discipline and ascetic practice, such as fasting and self-control, sleeping on the ground, standing, vigils andthe rest, which are related to the body and stop that aspect of the body which is vulnerable to passion fromcommitting sinful acts. Like the Old Testament itself, these things are also good, for they train the outer self and areguard against the workings of passion; but they are not a defense against and they do not prevent mental sins, so asto free us, with God's help, from jealousy, anger, and so on.

113. If we preserve, as we should, that purity of heart or watch and guard of the intellect whose image is the NewTestament, this will not only uproot all passions and evils from our hearts; it will also introduce joy, hopefulness,compunction, sorrow, tears,, an understanding of ourselves and of our sins, mmdfulness of death, true humility,unlimited love of God and man, and an intense and heartfelt longing for the divine.

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114. Just as it is impossible when walking not to part the air, so it is impossible for a man's heart not to be assailedcontinually by demons or be secretly energized by them, however great his bodily asceticism.

115. If you wish to be 'in the Lord', do not just seem to be a monk, and good, and gentle, and always at one withGod; decide to be such a person in truth. With all your strength pursue the virtue of attentiveness - that guard andwatch of the intellect, that perfect stillness of heart and blessed state of the soul when free from images, which is alltoo rarely found in man.

116. This is the path of true spiritual wisdom. In great watchfulness and fervent desire travel along it with theJesus Prayer, with humility and concentration, keeping the lips of both the senses and the intellect silent, self-controlled in food and drink and in all things of a seductive nature; travel along it with a mind trained inunderstanding, and with God's help it will teach you things you had not hoped for; it will give you knowledge,enlightenment and instruction of a kind to which your intellect was impervious while you were still walking in themurk of passions and dark deeds, sunk in forgetfulness and in the confusion of chaos.

117. Just as valleys produce copious wheat, so this wisdom produces copious blessings in the heart - or, rather,our Lord Jesus Christ produces them, for without Him we can do nothing (cf John 15:5). At first, you will find thatit is a ladder; then, a book to be read; then, as you advance, you will find that it is the heavenly city of Jerusalem,and you will have a clear spiritual vision of Christ, King of the hosts of Israel, together with His co-essential Fatherand the Holy Spirit, adored in our worship.

118. The demons always lead us into sin by means of deceitful fantasies. Through the fantasy of gaining wealththey led the wretched Judas to betray the Lord and God of all; through the deceit of worthless bodily comfort and ofesteem, gain and glory they put the noose around his neck and brought him to age-long death. The scoundrelsrequited him with precisely the opposite of what their fantasy, or provocation, had suggested to him.

119. Do you see how the enemies of our salvation make us fell by means of their fantasies, deceits and emptypromises? Satan himself was cast down like lightning from the heights because he fancied himself to be the equal ofGod (cf. Luke 10: 18); and he sundered

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Adam from God by making him fancy that he could be of divine rank (cf Gen. 3:5). In the same way the lying and

crafty deceives all who fall into sin.

120. We embitter the heart with the poison-of evil thoughts when we are led by forgetfulness to long neglect ofinner attention and the Jesus Prayer. But we sweeten it with the sense of blessed delight when in intense desire forGod we practice this attention and ' prayer resolutely, keenly and diligently in the mind's workshop. Then we areeager to pursue stillness of heart simply for the sweetness and delight it produces in the soul.

121. The science of sciences and art of arts is the mastery of evil thoughts. The best way to master them is to seewith spiritual vision the fantasy in which the demonic provocation is concealed and to protect the mmd from it. It isjust the same as the way in which we protect our bodily eyes, looking sharply about us and doing all we can toprevent anything, however small, from striking them.

122. Just as snow will not produce a name, or water a fire, or the thorn-bush a fig, so a person's heart will not befreed from demonic thoughts, words and actions until it has first purified itself inwardly, uniting watchfulness withthe Jesus Prayer, attaining humility and stillness of soul, and eagerly pressing forward on its path. But in its lack ofspiritual understanding, the inattentive soul will be devoid of every good and perfect thought, and barren and stupidas the mule. The soul's true peace lies in the gentle name of Jesus and m its emptying itself of impassioned thoughts.

123. When the soul conspires with the body in wickedness, then' together they build a city of vanity and a towerof pride, and they people them with unholy thoughts. But the Lord disrupts and destroys their concord through thefear of hell (cf. Gen. 11:1-9), forcing the soul, our ruling part, to think and say things opposed to the body. Out ofthis fear there arises a division, 'because the will of the flesh is hostile to God, for it is not subject to the law of God'(Rom. 8:7).

124. Each hour of the day we should note and weigh our actions and in the evening we should do what we can tofree ourselves, from the burden of them by means of repentance - if, that is, we wish, with Christ's help, to overcomewickedness. We should also make sure that we perform all our outward tasks in a manner that accords

with God's will, before God and for God alone, so that we are not mindlessly seduced by the senses.

125. For if with God's help we make progress daily by means of our watchfulness, we should not behaveindiscriminately and damage ourselves through a host of random meetings and conversations. On the contrary, weshould scorn all vanities for the sake of the beauty and blessmgs of holiness.

126. We should use the three aspects of the soul fittingly and in accordance with nature, as created by God, Weshould use our mcensive power against our outer self and against Satan. 'Be incensed', it is written, 'against sin' (cf.

Ps. 4:4), that is, be incensed with yourselves and the devil, so that you will not sin against God. Our desire should bedirected towards God and towards holiness. Our intelligence should control our incensive power and our desire withwisdom and skill, regulating them, admonishing them, correcting them and ruling them as a king rules over hissubjects. Then, even should they rebel against it, our inmost intelligence will direct the passions in a way thataccords with God's will, for we shall have set it in charge of them. The brother of the Lord

declares: 'He who doesnot lapse in his inmost intelligence is a perfect man, able also to bridle the whole body' (.Tas. 3:2). For the truth isthat every sin and transgression is brought about through these three aspects of the soul, just as every virtue andgood action is also produced through them.

127. Our intellect is darkened and remains fruitless whenever we speak words of worldly import or, entertainingsuch words in our mind, begin to give them our attention, or whenever the body and the intellect waste their time insome outward matter, or whenever we give ourselves over to vanities. For then we immediately lose our fervor, oursense of compunction, and our intimacy with God and knowledge of Him. So long as we concentrate our attentionon the intellect, we are enlightened; but when we are not attentive to it we are in darkness.

128. Whoever aspires day and night to peace and stillness of intellect finds it easy to be indifferent to all materialmatters and so does not labor in vain. But if he scorns or cheats his own conscience, he will sleep bitterly the deathof forgetfulness. This is the death that David prayed not to sleep (cf. Ps. 13:3); and the Apostle says: 'To know howto do good and yet not to do it is sin' (Jas. 4:17).

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129. If we give attention to the intellect and assiduously reestablish its activity, it will stop being neglectful andwill regain its proper state and its watchfulness.

130. A donkey going round and round in a mill cannot step out of the circle to which it is tethered, nor can theintellect which is not inwardly chastened advance in the path of holiness. With its inner eyes blinded, it cannotperceive holiness or the radiant light of Jesus.

131. A proud and spirited horse steps out delightedly once the rider is in the saddle. But the delighted intellectdelights in the light of the Lord when, free from concepts, it enters into the dawn of spiritual knowledge. Bycontinually denying itself, it advances from the wisdom necessary for the practice of the

virtues to an ineffablevision in which it contemplates holy and ineffable things. Then the heart is filled with perceptions of infinite anddivine realities and sees the God of gods in its own depths, so far as this is possible. Astounded, the intellectlovingly glorifies God, the Seer and the Seen, and the Savior of those who contemplate Him in this way.

132. When the heart has acquired stillness it will perceive the heights and depths of knowledge; and the ear of thestill intellect will be made to hear marvelous things from God.

133. A traveler setting out on a long, difficult and arduous journey and foreseeing that he may lose his way whenhe comes back, will put up signs and guideposts along his path in order to make his return simpler. The watchfulman, foreseeing this same thing, will use sacred texts to guide him.

134. For the traveler it is a source of joy to return to where he started. But for the watchful man to turn back is the

death of his deiform soul and the sign of his apostasy from thoughts, words and actions that accord with God's will.In the lethal sleep of his soul he will have thoughts stirring him up like goads with remembrance of the heavy torporand indolence that is his because of his negligence.

135. When we are in trouble or despair or have lost hope, we should do what David did: pour out our hearts toGod and tell Him of our needs and troubles, just as they are (cf Ps. 142:2). It is because He can deal with us wiselythat we confess to God: He can make our troubles easy to bear, if this is for our benefit, and can save us from thedejection which destroys and corrupts.

136. The mcensive power roused in an unnatural fashion against[VI] 186

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men, sorrow that does not accord with God's will and listlessness are all equally destructive of holy thoughts andspiritual knowledge. If we confess these things the Lord will rid us of them and fill us with joy.

137. When combined with watchfulness and deep understanding, the Jesus Prayer will erase from our heart eventhose thoughts rooted there against our will.

138. When under the pressure of stupid thoughts, we will find relief and joy by rebuking ourselves truthfully andunemotionally, or by confessing everything to the Lord as to a human being. In both these ways we will always findtranquility, whatever troubles us.

139. The Fathers regard Moses the Lawgiver as an icon of the intellect. He saw God in the burning bush (cfExod. 3:2-4:17): his face shone with glory (cf. Exod. 34:30); he was made a god to Pharaoh by the God of gods (cf.Exod. 7:1): he flayed Egypt with a scourge; he led Israel out of bondage and gave laws. These happenings, whenseen metaphorically and spiritually, are activities and privileges of the intellect.

140. Aaron, the brother of Moses, is an icon of the outer self. On this account we too should bring angryaccusations against our outer self as Moses did against Aaron when he sinned: 'In what way did Israel do you wrong,that you should hasten to turn them from the Lord, the living God and Ruler of all?' (cf. Exod. 32: 21).

141. Among many other good things, the Lord showed us, when He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead (cf.John 11:33), that we should reject with angry indignation all that is womanish and unstable in our soul; we shouldstrive after firmness of .character, for this is able to free our self-reproach from arrogance, pride and self-love.

142. Just as it is impossible to cross the sea without a boat, so it is impossible to repulse the provocation of an evilthought without invoking Jesus Christ.

143. Rebuttal bridles evil thoughts, but the invocation of Jesus Christ drives them from the heart. Now when theprovocation has taken the form of a mental image of a sensory object, the evil thought behind it can be identified.For instance, if the image is of the face of someone who has angered us, or of a beautiful woman, or of gold orsilver, it can at once be shown that it is the thought of rancor, or of unchastity, or of avarice that fills our heart withfantasies. And if our

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intellect is experienced, well-trained and used to guarding itself: and to examining clearly and openly the seductivefantasies and deceits of the demons, it will instantly 'quench the fiery darts of the devil' (cf. Eph. 6:16), counter-attacking by means of its power of rebuttal and the Jesus Prayer. It will not allow the impassioned fantasy to consortwith it or allow our thoughts passionately to conform themselves to the fantasy, or to become intimate with it, or bedistracted by it, or give assent to it. If anything like this happens, then evil actions will follow as surely as nightfollows day.

144. If our intellect is inexperienced in the art of watchfulness it at once begins to entertain whatever impassionedfantasy appears in it, and plies it with illicit questions and responds to it illicitly. Then our own thoughts areconjoined to the demonic fantasy, which waxes and burgeons until it appears lovely and delectable to the welcomingand despoiled intellect. The intellect then is deceived in much the same way as lambs when a stray dog comes intothe field in which they happen to be: in their innocence they often run towards the dog as though it were theirmother, and their only profit in coming near it is that they pick up something of its stench and foulness. In the sameway our thoughts run ignorantly after demonic fantasies that appear in our intellect and, as 1 said, the two jointogether and one can see them plotting to destroy the city of Troy like Agamemnon and Menelaus. For they plottogether the course of action they must take in order to bring about, in practice and by means of the body, thatpurpose which the demons have persuaded them is sweet and delectable. In this Way sins are produced in the soul:and hence the need to bring out into the open what is in our hearts.

145. The intellect, being good-natured and innocent, readily goes in pursuit of lawless fantasies: and it can berestrained only on condition that its intelligence, the ruler of the passions always bridles it and holds it back.

146. Contemplation and spiritual knowledge are indeed the guides and agents of the ascetic life; for when themind is raised up by them it becomes indifferent to sensual pleasures and to other material attractions, regardingthem as worthless.

147. The life of attentiveness, brought to fruition in Christ Jesus, the father of contemplation and spiritualknowledge. Linked to humility, it engenders divine exaltation and droughts of the

wisest kind. As the prophet Isaiah says: 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength: they shall mountup with wings and soar aloft through the power of the Lord' (cf. Isa. 40:31).

148. To human beings it seems hard and difficult to still the mind so that it rests from all thought. Indeed, to

enclose what is bodiless within the limits of the body does demand toil and struggle, not only from the uninitiatedbut also from those experienced in inner immaterial warfare. But he who through unceasing prayer holds the LordJesus within his breast will not tire in following Him, as the Prophet says (cf. Jer. 17:16. LXX). Because of Jesus'beauty and sweetness he will not desire what is merely mortal. Nor will he be disgraced by his enemies, the wickeddemons that walk on every side; for he confronts them at the entrance to his heart and, with Jesus' help, drives themaway.

149. If the soul has Christ with it, it will not be disgraced by its enemies even at death, when it rises to heaven'sentrance: but then, as now, it will boldly confront them. But let it not tire in calling upon the Lord Jesus Christ, theSon of God, day and night until the time of its departure from this mortal life, and He will speedily avenge it inaccordance with the promise which He Himself made when speaking of the unjust judge (cf. Luke 18:1-8). Indeed,He will avenge it both in this present life and after its departure from its body.

150. As you sail across the sea of the intellect, put your trust in Jesus, for secretly in your heart He says: 'Fear not,my child Jacob, the least of Israel; fear not, you worm Israel, I will protect you' (cf. Isa. 41:13-14). If God is for us,what evil one is against us (cf Rom. 8:31)? For He has blessed the pure of heart and

given the commandments; andso Jesus, who alone is truly pure, in a divine way readily enters into hearts that are pure and dwells in them.Therefore, as Paul counsels, let us ceaselessly exercise our intellect in devotion (cf. 1 Tim. 4:7). For devotion uprootsthe seeds sown by the devil, and is the path of the intelligence.

151. David's words, 'He will delight himself in the abundance of peace' (cf. Ps. 37:11), apply to him who is nottaken in by the appearance of man and who judges injustice in his heart. That is to say, they apply to one who is nottaken in by the forms of the demons and who is not led to meditate sin because of these forms, judging unjustly inthe land of his heart and giving over to sin what is

righteous. For the great gnostic Fathers in some of their writings call the demons 'men' because demons too areendowed with intelligence. For example, in the gospel passage the Lord says: 'An evil man has done this, and mixedtares among the wheat' (cf. Matt. 13:24-30). Those who commit evil lack the power swiftly to rebut their evilthoughts. Hence they are consumed and destroyed by them.

152. We will travel the road of repentance correctly if, as we begin to give attention to the intellect, we combinehumility with watchfulness, and prayer with the power to rebut evil thoughts. In this way we will adorn the chamberof our heart with the holy and venerable name of Jesus Christ as with a lighted lamp, and will sweep our heart cleanof wickedness, purifying and embellishing it. But if we trust only in our own watchfulness and attentiveness, weshall quickly be pushed aside by our enemies. We shall be overturned and cast down by their extreme craftiness. Wewill become ever-more fully entangled in their nets of evil thought, and will readily be slaughtered by them, lackingas we do the powerful sword of the name of Jesus Christ. For only this sword, swiftly turning in the undivided heart,is able to cut them down, to bum and obliterate them as fire the reed.

153. It is the task of unceasing watchfulness - and one of great benefit and help to the soul - to see the mentalimages of evil thoughts as soon as they are formed

in the intellect. The task of rebuttal is to counter and expose suchthoughts when they attempt to infiltrate our intellect in the form of an image of some material thing. What instantlyextinguishes and destroys every demonic concept, thought, fantasy, illusion and idol is the invocation of the Lord.And in our intellect we ourselves can observe how our great God, Jesus, triumphs over them all, and how Heavenges us, poor, base and useless as we are.

154. Most of us do not realize that all evil thoughts are but images of material and worldly things. Yet if wepersist in watchful prayer, this will rid our mind of all such images; it will also make if conscious both of the devicesof our enemies and of the great benefit of prayer and watchfulness. 'With year eyes you will see how spiritualsinners are recompensed; you yourself will see spiritualits' and understand', says David the divine poet (cf Ps. 91:8).

155. Whenever possible, we should always remember death, for this displaces all cares and vanities, allowing usto guard our intellect

and giving us unceasing prayer, detachment from our body and hatred of sin. Indeed, it is a source of almost everyvirtue. We should therefore, if possible, use it as we use our own breathing.

156. A heart that has been completely emptied of mental images gives birth to divine, mysterious intellections thatsport within it like fish and dolphins in a calm sea. The sea is fanned by a soft wind, the heart's depth by the HolySpirit. 'And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying: "Abba, Father" '(Gal. 4:6).

157. Every monk will be uncertain about his spiritual work until he has achieved watchfulness of intellect. Eitherhe will be ignorant of the beauty of this watchfulness or, if he is aware of it, he will fail to achieve it because of hisnegligence. He will resolve his uncertainty only when he has learnt to guard his intellect. This guarding is rightlycalled mental philosophy or the practical

wisdom of the intellect. Through it one finds the way of Him who said, 'Iam the way, the resurrection and the life' (cf John 11:25; 14:6).

158. Again, every monk will be at a loss when he sees the abyss of his evil thoughts and the swarming children ofBabylon. But again Christ will resolve this doubt if we always base our mind firmly on Him. By dashing themagainst this rock we can repulse all the children of Babylon (cf. Ps. 137:9), thus doing what we want with them, inaccordance with the sayings: 'Whoever keeps the commandment will know no evil thing' (Eccles. 8:5. LXX), and'Without Me you can do nothing' (John 15:5).

159. A true monk is one who has achieved watchfulness; and he who is truly watchful is a monk in his heart.

160. Human life extends cyclically through years, months, weeks, days and nights, hours and minutes. Throughthese periods we should extend our ascetic labors - our watchfulness, our prayer, our sweetness of heart, our diligentstillness - until our departure from this life.

161. The hour of death will come upon us, it will come, and we shall not escape it. May the prince of this worldand of the air (cf. John 14:30; Eph. 2:2) find our misdeeds few and petty when he comes, so that he will not havegood grounds for convicting us. Otherwise we shall weep in vain. Tor that servant who knew his lord's will and didnot do it as a servant, shall be beaten with many stripes' (cf. Luke 12 :47).

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On Watchfulness and HoHness

Written for Theodoulos

162. 'Woe to those who have lost their heart: what will they do at at the visitation of the Lord?' (cf. Ecclus. 2:14.LXX). Therefore, brethren, we should labor m earnest.

163. Impassioned droughts follow hard upon thoughts that appear to be innocent and dispassionate: the latter openthe way for the former. This we have found

through years of experience and observation.

164. We should indeed be cut in two by a wise decision of our own free will: we should be our own worstenemy. If we want to fulfill, the first and greatest commandment: - by which 1 mean the Christ-like way of life,blessed humility, the life of the incarnate God - we should have the same feelings toward ourselves as a personmight have toward someone who had time and again grievously injured him and treated him unjustly. Indeed, weshould have even stronger feelings than these. Hence the Apostle says: 'Who shall deliver me from the body of thisdeath? . . . For it is not subject to the law of God' (Rom. 7:24; 8:7). Here he shows that to subject the body tothe willof God is something within our own power. 'For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when weare judged, we are chastened by the Lord' (1 Cor. 11:31-32).

165. The fruit starts in the flower; and the guarding of the intellect begins with self-control in food and drink, therejection of all evil thoughts and abstention from them, and stillness of heart.

166. While we are being strengthened in Christ Jesus and beginning to move forward in steadfast watchfulness.He at first appears in our intellect like a torch which, carried in the hand of the intellect, guides us along the tracks ofthe mind; then He appears like a full moon, circling the heart's firmament; then He appears to us like the sun,radiating justice, clearly revealing Himself in the full light of spiritual vision.

167. Jesus mystically reveals these things to the intellect that perseveres in the commandment: 'Circumcise theforeskin of your heart' (Deut. 10:16). As has been said, the assiduous practice of watchfulness teaches a manmarvelous droughts. 'For God is impartial' (Rom. 2:11); and therefore the Lord says; 'Hear Me and understand: forto him who has, more shall be given and he shall have in abundance; and from him who has not, shall be taken evenwhat he thinks he has' (cf Luke 8:18). 'All things work together for

good to them that love God' (Rum. 8:28); how much the more, then, wiU the

virtues work together in the case ofsuch people?

168. A ship does not go far without water; and there is no progress whatsoever in the guarding of the intellectwithout watchfulness, humility and the Jesus Prayer.

169. Stones form the foundation of a house; but the foundation of sanctity - and its roof - is the holy and venerablename of our Lord Jesus Christ. A foolish captain can easily wreck his ship during a storm, dismissing the sailors,throwing the sails and oars into the sea, and going to sleep himself; but the soul can be sent to the bottom even moreswiftly by the demons if it neglects watchfulness and does not call upon the name of Jesus Christ when they begintheir provocations.

170. We write of what we know; and for those who want to understand what we say, we bear witness to all thatwe have seen as we journeyed on our path. He Himself has declared: 'If a man does not abide in Me, he is cast out asa branch; and men gather it, and cast it into the fire, and it is burned. If he abides in Me, I abide in him' (cf John15:5-6). The sun cannot shine without light; nor can the heart be cleansed of the stain of destructive thoughtswithout invoking in prayer the name of Jesus. This being the case, we should use that name as we do our ownbreath. For that name is light, while evil thoughts are darkness; it is God and Master, while evil thoughts are slavesand demons.

171. The guarding of the intellect may appropriately be called 'light-producing', 'lightning-producing', 'light-giving' and 'fire-bearing', for truly it surpasses endless virtues, bodily and other. Because of this, and because of theglorious light to which it gives birth, one must honor this virtue with worthy epithets. Those who are seized by lovefor this virtue, from being worthless sinners, ignorant, profane, uncomprehending and unjust, are enabled to becomejust, responsive, pure, holy, and wise through Jesus Christ. Not only this, but they are able to contemplate mysticallyand to theologize; and when they have become contemplatives, they bathe in a sea of pure and infinite light,touching it ineffably and living and dwelling in it. They have tasted that the Lord is good (cf Ps. 34:8), and in theseharbingers are fulfilled the words of David: 'Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto Thy name; and the uprightshall dwell in Thy presence' (Ps. 140:13). Such men alone

truly call upon God and give thanks to Him, and in their love for Him continually speak with Him.

172. Woe to what is withm from what without! For the inner self suffers great distress from the outer senses, andwhen it suffers in this way it scourges the outer senses. He who has experienced this knows already what it means.

173. According to the Fathers, if our inner self is watchful it can protect the outer self. But we and the demonscombine in committing sins. The demons work through evil thoughts alone by forming in the intellect what fancifulpictures they wish; while we sin both inwardly through evil thoughts and outwardly through our actions. Lacking thedensity of physical bodies, the demons through deceitfulness and guile are purveyors of torment, both to themselvesand to us, by means of evil thoughts alone. If they did not lack the density of physical bodies, they would always besinning through outward actions as well, for their will is always disposed to ungodliness.

174. The single-phrased Jesus Prayer destroys and consumes the deceits of the demons. For when we invokeJesus, God and Son of God, constantly and tirelessly. He does not allow them to project in the mind's mirror eventhe first hint of their infiltration - that is to say, their provocation - or any form, nor does He allow them to have anyconverse with the heart. If no demonic form enters the heart, it will be empty of evil thoughts, as we have said: for itis the demons' habit to converse with the soul by means of evil thoughts and so deceitfully to pervert it.

175. It is through unceasing prayer that the mind is cleansed of the dark clouds, the tempests of the demons. Andwhen it is cleansed, the divine light of Jesus cannot but shine in it, unless we are puffed up with self-esteem anddelusion and a love of ostentation, and elevate ourselves towards the unattainable, and so are deprived of Jesus' help.For Christ, the paradigm of humility, loathes all such self-inflation.

176. Let us hold fast, therefore, to prayer and humility, for together with

watchfulness they act like a burningsword against the demons. If we do this, we shall daily and hourly be able to celebrate a secret festival of joy withinour hearts.

177. Every evil thought is subsumed in the eight principal evil thoughts and all take their origin from these eight,much as every

accursed demon-god of the Greeks derives from Hera and Zeus according to their myths. These eight approach theheart's entrance and, if they find the intellect unguarded, one by one they enter, each in its own time. Whichever ofthe eight enters the heart introduces a swarm of other evil thoughts as well; and having thus darkened the intellect, itstimulates the body and provokes it to sinful actions.

178. Whoever, then, watches out for the head of the serpent, and strikes it vehemently with all his power ofrebuttal, will ward off the fight. By crushing the serpent's head he repulses a host of evil thoughts and actions. Themind then remains undisturbed, God approving its vigilance over its thoughts. In return it is given the ability toknow how to overcome its adversaries, and how little by little to purify the heart from thoughts that defile the innerself. As the Lord Jesus said, 'Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, and these are the thingswhich defile a man' (cf Matt. 15:19-20).

179. In this way the soul can attain in the Lord that state of beauty, loveliness and integrity in which it was createdby God in the beginning. As Antony, the great servant of God, said, 'Holiness is achieved when the intellect is in itsnatural state.' And again he said: 'The soul realizes its integrity when its intellect is in that state in which it wascreated.' And shortly after this he adds: 'Let us purify our mind, for 1 believe that when the mind is completely pureand is in its natural state, it gains penetrating insight, and it sees more clearly and further than the demons, since theLord reveals things to it.' So spoke the renowned Antony, according to the Life of Antony by Athanasios the Great.

180. Every evil thought produces in the intellect the image of some material thing; for since the devil is anintellect he cannot deceive us except by making use of things we are in the habit of perceiving by means of thesenses.

181. Since we are human beings, it is not in our nature to pursue birds through the air or to fly as they do.Similarly, without watchful and frequent prayer we cannot prevail over bodiless, demonic droughts, or fix the eye ofthe intellect fully and intently upon God. Without such prayer, we merely hunt after earthly things.

182. If you really wish to cover your-evil droughts with shame,[VI] 195

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to be still and calm, and to watch over your heart without hindrance, let the Jesus Prayer cleave to your breath, andin a few days you will find that this is possible.

183. Letters cannot be written on air; they have to be inscribed on some material if they are to have anypermanence. Similarly, we should weld our hard-won watchfulness to the Jesus Prayer, so that this watchfulnessmay always be attached to Him and may through Him remain with us for ever.

184. Bring your works to the Lord, and you will find grace. Then the words of the Prophet will not be spoken ofyou: 'Thou art near in their mouth, 0 Lord, and far from their reins '(cf. Jer. 12; 2). None but Jesus Christ Himself,unifier of what is disunited, can give your heart lasting peace from passions.

185. Both mental converse with evil thoughts and external encounters and chatter alike darken the soul. If we arenot to injure the intellect, we must not spare either of these chatterboxes, whether they be our own thoughts or otherpeople. And we must not spare them for a most cogent reason: because otherwise our intellect will be darkened andwe will lose our watchfulness. If we are darkened by forgetfulness, we destroy the intellect.

186. He who with all diligence keeps his purity of heart will have Christ, establisher of that purity, as his teacher,and Christ will secretly communicate His

will to him. 'I will hear what God the Lord will speak within me', saysDavid, giving expression to this (Ps. 85:8. LXX). Speaking of the intellect's investigation of itself in the course of

the unseen war, and of Ac help given by God, he says: 'And a man wiU say. Is there a reward for the righteous?'Then, giving the solution to this problem, he says: 'Truly, he is a God that judges those in the earth' (Ps. 58: ILLXX) - that is to say, judges the wicked demons in the earth of the heart. And elsewhere he says: 'A man shallapproach, and the heart is deep, and God shall be exalted' (Ps. 64:6-7. LXX). Then we will regard the attacks of thedemons as stones thrown by infants.

187. Let us live every moment in 'applying our hearts to wisdom' (Ps. 90:12), as the Psalmist says, continuallybreathing Jesus Christ, the power of God the Father and the wisdom of God (cf. 1 Cor. 1:24). If, however, we aredistracted by some circumstance or other and grow slack in our spiritual effort, the following morning let us againgird up the loins of our intellect and once more set to

work forcefully. There is no excuse for us if, knowing what is to be done, we do not do it.

188. Noxious foods give trouble when taken into the body; but as soon as he feels the pain, the person who haseaten them can quickly take some emetic and so be unharmed. Similarly, once the intellect that has imbibed evilthoughts senses their bitterness, it can easily expel them and get rid of them completely by means of the Jesus Prayeruttered from the depths of the heart. This lesson, and the experience corresponding to it, have by God's graceconveyed understandmg to those who practice watchfulness.

189. With your breathing combine watchfulness and the name of Jesus, or humility and the unremitting study ofdeath. Both may confer great blessing.

190. The Lord said: 'Learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls'(Matt. 11:29).

191. The Lord said: 'Whoever humbles himself as this little child will be exalted; and whoever exalts himself willbe abased' (cf Matt. 18:4; 23:12). 'Learn, from Me', He said. Do you see how this learning means humility? For Hiscommandment is eternal life (cf. John 12:50), and this in turn is humility. Thus he who is not humble has lost lifeand obviously will be found with its opposite.

192. If every virtue comes into being through soul and body, and soul and body are the creation of God, how shallwe not be utterly mad if we boast of accidental adornments of soul or body, and puff ourselves up, supported by ourvanity as by a flimsy staff? Worst of all, how, through our extreme wickedness and folly, shall we not rouse againstus God who transcends us so infinitely? 'For God ranges Himself against the proud' (Jas. 4:6). Because of ourarrogance and vanity, instead of imitating the Lord in humility, we embrace His enemy, the demon of pride. It waswith reference to this that the Apostle said: 'For what do you have which you did not receive?' (1 Cor. 4:7). Did youcreate yourself? And if you received from God both soul and body, from which and in which and through which

every virtue comes into being, 'why do you boast as if you had not received?' (1 Cor. 4:7). For it is the Lord who hasgiven you these things.

193. Purification of heart, through which we acquire humility and every blessing that comes from above, consistssimply in our not letting evil droughts enter the soul.

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194. If with God's help and for His sake alone we manage to guard the intellect for some time, it acquires a certaingood sense in pursuing the spiritual battle. This good sense m its turn gives us, in no small measure, the ability toan'ange

our work and regulate our words with a judgment that accords with God's will.

195. The high priest's emblems in the Old Testament are models for purity of heart. They teach us so to giveattention to the gold disc of the heart (cf Exod. 28:22. LXX) that, should we tarnish it through sin, we shouldcleanse it with tears, repentance and prayer. For the intellect is very receptive and hard to hold back from illicitdroughts. It pursues with equal readiness both good and evil images.

196. Truly blessed is the man whose mind and heart are as closely attached to the Jesus Prayer and to the ceaselessinvocation of His name as air to the body or flame to the wax. The sun rising over the earth creates the daylight; andthe venerable and holy name of the Lord Jesus, shining continually in the mind, gives birth to countless intellectionsradiant as the sun.

197. When clouds are scattered the air is clear; and when the fantasies of passion are scattered by Jesus Christ, thesun of righteousness, bright and star-like intellections are bom in the heart, for the heart is then illumined by Jesus.Solomon says: "They that trust in the Lord shall understand truth, and the faithful in love shall abide with Him'(Wisd. 3:9).

198. One of the saints has said: 'Let the rancorous man vent his rancor on the demons, and let the belligerent manturn his hostility once and for all against his own body. The flesh is a treacherous friend, and the more it is coddledthe more it fights back.' And again: 'Be hostile to your body, and fight against your stomach.'

199. In the paragraphs up to this point - those comprising the first and second centuries - we have set down how tolearn the difficult art of stilling the intellect. These paragraphs are the fruit not of our mind alone, but also of whatthe holy Fathers teach us about purity of intellect. Now, after a few words indicating the value of guarding theintellect, we shall draw to a close.

200. Come, then, you who long in spirit to see days of blessing, follow me towards that union attained through theguarding of the intellect; and 1, in the Lord, will instruct you in your task on earth and the angelic life. For neitherthe angels nor the intellect rivaling them in purity will ever be sated with praising the Creator. And

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just as the angels, being immaterial, do not concern themselves with food, so neither do material beings when oncethey have entered the heaven of the intellect's stillness and have themselves become angelic.

201. Just as the angels do not concern themselves with property and money, so those who have purified the soul'svision and who have attained the state of holiness are not troubled by the evil ploys of the demons. And just as therichness that comes from moving closer to God is evident in the angels, so love and intense longing for God isevident in those who have become angelic and gaze upwards towards the divine. Moreover, because the taste of thedivine and the ecstasy of desire make their longing ever more intense and insatiable as they ascend, they do not stopuntil they reach the Seraphim: nor do they rest from their watchfulness of intellect and the intense longing of theiraspiration until they have become angels in Christ Jesus our Lord.

202. There is no venom more poisonous than that of the asp or cobra, and there is no evil greater than that of self-love. The winged children of self-love are self-praise, self-satisfaction, gluttony, unchastit)', self-esteem, jealousyand the crown of all these, pride. Pride can drag down not men alone, but even angels from heaven, and surroundthem with darkness instead of light.

203. This, then, Theodoulos, comes to you from Hesychios, who bears the name of stillness even if he belies it inpractice. Yet perhaps it is not from us, but has been given by God, who is praised and glorified in the Father, the Sonand the Holy Spirit by every spiritual being, men and angels, and by all creation fashioned by the Holy Trinity, theone God. May we, too, reach His glorious kingdom through the prayers of the most pure Mother of God and of ourholy Fathers. To the unattainable God be everlasting glory. Amen.

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St Neilos The Ascetic

(d. c. 430)(Joliime l,pp. 199-251)

Introductory Note

St Neilos the Ascetic was abbot of a monastery near Ankyra (Ankara) in the early decades of the fifth century, and seems tohave died around the year 430. Possibly he was a disciple of St John Chrysostom. According to the traditional biography ofNeilos - accepted as authentic by St Nikodimos, but now considered legendaiy - he was originally from Constantinople, and afterserving as prefect of the city during the reign of Theodosios the Great (379-95) he became a hermit near Sinai. There seems infact to be no good reason for connecting him with the Sinaite peninsula.

The Ascetic Discourse of Neilos contains a valuable section on the relationship between the spiritual father and his disciples.In other of his writings, although not in this work, St Neilos refers to the invocation of the name of Jesus. Along with StDiadochos of Photiki, his younger contemporary, Neilos is the earliest writer to refer explicitly to the Jesus Prayer.

' See Neilos, Letters, ii, 140, 214; iii, 273, 278 (Migne, Patrologia Graeca, Ixxix, 260A, 261D, 312C, 520C, 52IBC). Compare I. Hausherr,Noms du Christ et voics d'oraison (Orientalia Christiana Analeda, 157, Rome, 1960), pp. 195-6.

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Many Greeks and not a few Jews attempted to philosophize: but only the disciples of Christ have pursued truewisdom, because they alone have Wisdom as their teacher, showing them by His example the way of life theyshould follow. For the Greeks, like actors on a stage, put on false masks; they were philosophers in name alone, butlacked true philosophy. They displayed their philosophic calling by their cloak, beard and staff, but indulged thebody and kept their desires as mistresses. They were slaves of gluttony and lust, accepting this as something natural.They were subject to anger and excited by glory, and they gulped down rich food like dogs. They did not realize thatthe philosopher must be above all a free man, and not a slave of the passions who can be bought or sold. A man ofupright life can be the slave of others and yet suffer no harm, but to be enslaved to the passions and pleasures bringsa man into disgrace and great ridicule.

Some of the Greeks imagined themselves to be engaged in metaphysics, but they neglected the practice of thevirtues altogether. Some were star-gazers, explaining the inexplicable, and claiming to know the size of the heavens,the dimensions of the sun and the movement of the stars. At tmies they even tried to theologize, although here thetruth lies beyond man's unaided grasp, and speculation is dangerous: yet in their way of life they were moredegraded than swine wallowing in the mud. And when some of them did try to apply their principles in practice,they became worse than those who only theorized, for they sold their labors for glory and praise. Usually their onlyobject was to show off, and they endured hardships simply to gain cheap applause. Moreover, what can be morestupid than to keep silent continually, live on vegetables, cover oneself with ragged garments of hair and spend one'sdays in a barrel,

if one expects no recompense after death? If the rewards of virtue are restricted to this present life, then one isengaged in a contest where no prizes are ever offered, wrestling all one's life for no return but the toil and the sweat.

Those of the Jews, on the other hand, who hold philosophy in honor - the Rechabites, the descendants of Jonadab(cf. Jer. 35:6) - do indeed encourage their disciples to follow an appropriate way of life. They always live in tents,abstaining from wine and all luxuries: their fare is frugal and provision for their bodily needs is moderate. Whiledevoting fall attention to the practice of the virtues, they also attach great importance to contemplation, as theirname 'Essene' indicates. In short, they pursue the goal of philosophy while avoiding the things that conflict withtheir calling. But what do they gain from their arduous ascetic contest, since they deny Christ, who acts as judge andgives the award? So they, too, fail to gain from their labors, falling short of the true goal of philosophy.

For philosophy is a state of moral integrity combined with a doctrine of true knowledge concerning reality. Both

Jews and Greeks fell short of this, for they rejected the Wisdom that is from heaven and tried to philosophizewithout Christ, who alone has revealed the true philosophy in both His life and His teaching. For by the purity of Hislife He was the first to establish the way of true philosophy. He always held His soul above

the passions of the body,and in the end, when His death was required by His design for man's salvation. He laid down even His soul. In thisHe taught us that the true philosopher must renounce all life's pleasures, mastering pains and passions, and payingscant attention to the body: he must not overvalue even his soul, but must readily lay it down when holinessdemands.

The apostles received this way of life from Christ and made it their own, renouncing the world in response to Hiscall, disregarding fatherland, relatives and possessions. At once they adopted a harsh and strenuous way of life,facing every kind of adversity, afflicted, tormented, harassed, naked, lacking even necessities; and finally they metdeath boldly, imitating their Teacher faithfully in all things. Thus through their actions they left behind a true imageof the highest way of life.

Although all Christians should have modeled their own life on this image, most of them either lacked the will todo so or else made

only feeble efforts. There were, however, a few who had the Strength to rise above the turmoil of the world and toflee from the agitation of cities. Having escaped from this turbulence, they embraced the monastic life andreproduced in themselves the pattern of apostolic virtue. They preferred voluntary poverty to possessions, becausethis freed them from distraction, and so as to control the passions, they satisfied their bodily needs with food thatwas readily available and simply prepared, rather than with richly dressed dishes. Soft and unnecessary clothing theyrejected as an invention of human luxury, and they wore only such plain garments as are required for the body. Itseemed to them a betrayal of philosophy to turn their attention from heavenly things to earthly concerns moreappropriate to animals. They ignored the world, being above-human passions.

They did not seek excessive gain by exploiting each other; nor did they bring lawsuits against one another, foreach had his own conscience as an impartial judge. One was not rich while another was destitute, nor did oneovereat while another starved. The generosity of those who were well off made good what

others lacked, thiswillingness to share eliminating every anomaly and establishing equality and fairness - though even then inequalitystill existed, produced not as it is now by the mad struggle for social status, but by a great desire to live more humblythan others. Envy, malice, arrogance and haughtiness were banished, along with all that leads to discord. Some wereimpervious or dead to the coarser passions; they had so firmly repudiated all traces of them from the start that now,through daily asceticism and perseverance, they had acquired inner stability and did not even have fantasies of themin their dreams. In short, they were lights shining in darkness; they were fixed stars illuminating the jet-black nightof life; they were harbor walls unshaken by storms. They showed everyone how simple it is to escape unharmedfrom the provocations of the passions.

But this strict and angelic way of life has suffered the fate of a portrait many times recopied by careless hands,until gradually all likeness to the original has been lost. Though we are crucified to the world, though we haverenounced this transitory life and our purely human limitations, aspiring to the state of the angels by sharing theirdispassion, yet we have relapsed and fallen back. Because of our material concerns and shameful acquisitiveness, wehave blunted the edge of true asceticism; and by our negligence we

discredit even those who through their genuine sanctity truly deserve to be honored. Wearing the monastic habit, wehave 'put our hand to the plough', yet we look back, forgetting and even strongly rejecting our duties, and so do notbecome 'fit for the kingdom of heaven' (cf Luke 9:62).

So we no longer pursue plainness and simplicity of life. We no longer value stillness, which helps to free us frompast defilement, but prefer a whole host of things which distract us uselessly from our trae goal. Rivalry overmaterial possessions has made us forget the counsel of the Lord, who urged us to take no thought for earthly things,but to seek only the kingdom of heaven (cf. Matt. 6:33). Deliberately doing the opposite, we have disregarded theLord's commandment, trusting in ourselves and not in His protection. For He says: 'Behold the fowls of the air: forthey do not sow or reap or gather into bams; yet your heavenly Father feeds them' (Matt. 6:26); and again: 'Considerthe lilies of

the field, how they grow; they do not toil or spin' (Matt. 6:28). When He sent the apostles out to declarethe good news to their fellow men. He even forbade them to cany wallet, purse or staff, and told them to be contentwith His promise: 'The workman is worthy of his food' (Matt. 10:10). This promise is to be trusted far more than ourown resources.

Despite all this we go on accumulating as much land as we can, and we buy up flocks of sheep, fine oxen and fatdonkeys - the sheep to supply us with wool, the oxen to plough and provide food for us and fodder for themselvesand for the other animals, the donkeys to transport from foreign lands the goods and luxuries which our own countrylacks. We also select the crafts which give the highest return, even though they absorb all our attention and leave notime for the remembrance of God. It is as if we accused God of being incapable of providing for us, or ourselves ofbeing unable to fulfill the commitments of our calling. Even if we do not admit this, openly, our actions condemn us;for we show approval of the ways of worldly men by engaging in the same pursuits, and perhaps workmg at themeven harder than they do.

Thus, like so many others, we look on the ascetic way as a means of gain, and follow the once unworldly life ofblessedness merely in order to avoid hard work through a feigned piety, and to gain greater scope for indulging inillusory pleasures. We shamelessly

revile those who live simply, and sometimes even our own superiors, as though we thought the spiritual life was amatter of aggressiveness, not of humility and gentleness. As a result, instead of being respected, we are regarded as auseless crowd, involved in buying and selling just as much as the man in the street. Nothing marks us out as itshould from others, and we distinguish ourselves merely by the habit that we wear, not by our way of life. We rejectall ascetic effort, but madly desire a reputation for asceticism. We have debased the trath into play-acting.

Today, a person wears the monastic habit without washing away the stains on his soul, or erasing the marks whichpast sins have stamped upon his mind; indeed,

he may still take lustful pleasure in the fantasies these sins suggest.He has not yet trained his character so as to fit his vocation, nor does he grasp the purpose of the divine philosophy.Already he has developed a Pharisaic superciliousness, being filled with conceit by his robes. He goes about

carrying various tools the use of which he does not understand. By virtue of his outward dress he lays claim to aknowledge -which in reality he has not tasted even with the tip of his tongue. He is a reef, not a harbor; a whitedsepulcher, not a temple: a wolf, not a sheep; the ruin of those decoyed by his appearance.

Unable to endure the strictness of life in their monastery, such monks run away and swarm into a city like a partyof revelers. Then, when they get hungry, they begin to deceive others with an outward show of piety, and are readyto do anything to satisfy their needs: for nothing is more compelling and inventive than the demands of the body,especially when one is idle. Their techniques get more and more cunning and ingenious. They hang about the doorsof the wealthy like parasites, and like slaves they dance attendance on them through the streets, shoving people outof the way and clearing a path for them. All this they do for the sake of a meal, never having leamt to control theirgluttony. Nor do they obey Moses and carry on their girdle a trowel for covering their excrement (cf Deut. 23:13.LXX). They do not realize that indulgence in gluttony leads only to further hunger, and that they should satisfy theneeds of the body only with whatever food is at hand, thus quelling their shameful and disordered appetites.

This is why the name of God is blasphemed, and the ascetic way of life, instead of inspiring men, fills them withdisgust. The

attainments of genuine ascetics are dismissed as trickery. Cities are full of vagabonds, and people are pestered athome, revoked by the very sight of these monks, seeing them standing at their doors more shamelessly than beggars.Many have even been admitted into people's homes, where for a little while they make a pretence of piety,deceitfully concealing their wicked plans: then they rob their hosts and make off, thus bringing the whole monasticlife into disrepute. Once the monks taught self-restraint: now they are banished from cities as a corrupting

influence,and shunned like lepers. People would rather trust thieves and burglars than those who follow the monastic life,thinking straightforward criminals easier to guard against than plausible tricksters.

These monks have not so much as begun the ascetic life, far less leamt the value of stillness. Perhaps they came tothe monastic life because of some pressure, not realizing what is involved: so they regard it merely as a way ofearning their living. This attitude might change to something more spiritual, if only they would stop knockmg onevery door and if, shamed by their monastic habit into restraining their gross acquisitiveness, they were willing toimpose a much-needed curb on their body. But, being self-indulgent, they do not realize how their soft livingconstantly breeds new and extravagant desires.

It is difficult to treat those who suffer from chronic diseases. For how can you explain the value of health topeople who have never enjoyed it, but have been sickly from birth? Because this is their customary state, they regardit as a misfortune of nature, and even as perfectly normal. It is useless to offer advice to those who have no intentionof taking it, but continue regardless on the downward path. In particular, those with a lust for any kind of gain,however shameful, are completely deaf to advice.

As for ourselves, who claim to have renounced Worldly life and its desires in our longing for holiness, and whoprofess to follow Christ, why do we entangle ourselves once more in worldly distractions? Why do we wronglybuild again what we have rightly torn down? Why do we share in the folly of those who are disloyal to theirvocation? Why in our pursuit of empty trivialities do we kindle the appetites of our weaker brethren and fill themwith greed? The Lord has commanded us to watch over those who are easily misled, not inciting them to evil, and

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pleasure. In this way, by not following our own unconsidered impulses, we help many of our simpler brethren to bemore careful, and set them an example by our attitude to worldly concerns.

Why do we attach such value to material things, seeing that we have been taught to despise them? Why do wecling to money and possessions, and disperse our

intellect among a host of useless cares? Our preoccupation withsuch things diverts us from what is more important and makes us neglect the well-being of the soul, leading us toperdition. For we who profess to be philosophers and pride ourselves on being superior to pleasure are seen topursue material gain with more zest than anyone else. Nothing brings such severe punishment on us as ourpersuasion of others to imitate our own evil ways.

Let no one despise these words. Either correct your evil conduct, which brings disgrace upon the divinephilosophy, leading others to indifference, or else give up all claim to be a philosopher. For the true philosopherpossessions are superfluous, since he detaches himself from bodily concerns for the sake of the soul's purity. If youraim is material riches and pleasure, why pretend to honor philosophy while you act in a manner which entirelyconflicts with it, cloaking your conduct under fine words?

So great is our preoccupation with material things that we feel no shame when, on breaking the Savior'scommandments, we are rebuked even by those whom we despise because they still live 'in the world': for they nowteach us instead of us teaching them. When we are quarrelling, they remind us that 'the servant of Christ must notengage in strife, but be gentle to all men' (2 Tim. 2:24); when we are disputing about money and possessions, theyquote to us the text, 'If anyone . . . takes away your coat, let him have your cloak also' (Matt. 5:40). They ridiculeand deride us because of the incongruity between our actions and our vocation. Indeed, is it ever right to engage indisputes in order to protect our property? Suppose that someone destroys the boundary of our vineyard and adds it tohis own land: someone else lets his animal loose in it: and someone else diverts the water supply from our garden.Must we then lose all self-control in such situations, and become worse than madmen? But in that case our intellect,which should be engaged in the contemplation of created beings, must now give its attention to lawsuits, turning itscontemplative power to

worldly cunning, so as to defend a quantity of unnecessary possessions.

Why do we try to make other people's property our own,' weighing ourselves down with material fetters, andpaying HO attention to the prophet's imprecation:

'Woe to him who gathers what is not his own, and heavily loads hisyoke' (cf. Hab. 2:6. LXX). Those who pursue us are, as Jeremiah says, 'swifter than the eagles of heaven' (Lam.

4:19); but we weigh ourselves down with worldly things, move slowly along the road and so are easily overtaken byour pursuer, covetousness, which Paul taught us to flee (of. Col. 3: s). Even if we are not heavily laden, we must stillrun as fast as we can, or else the enemy will overtake us.

Attachment to worldly things is a grave obstacle to those who are striving after holiness, and often brings ruin toboth soul and body. For what destroyed Naboth the Israelite? Was not his vineyard the cause of his death, because itroused the jealousy of his neighbor Ahab (cf. 1 Kgs. 21:1-16)? What made the two and a half tribes stay outside thepromised land, but their huge herds and flocks (cf. Num. 34:15)? What divided Lot and Abraham? Was it not alsotheir huge herds and flocks which caused continual quarrels among the herdsmen, and in the end forced them to part(cf. Gen. 13:5-11)?

So possessions arouse feelings of jealousy against their owners, cut off their owners from men better thanthemselves, divide families, and make friends hate one another. Possessions, moreover, have no place in the life tocome, and even in this present life have no great use. Why, then, do we abandon the service of God and devoteourselves entirely to empty trivialities? For it is God who supplies us with all that we need. Human efforts inevitablyfail unless God helps us; while God in His providence bestows every blessing without man's assistance. Whatbenefits were gained from their efforts by those to whom God said: 'You sowed much and gathered little, and 1 blewit away out of your hands' (cf. Hag. 1:9)? And what did the righteous lack, though they gave no thought at all fortheir needs? Were not the Israelites fed in the desert for forty years, without cultivating the land? They always hadenough to eat, for in a strange and miraculous way quails came in from the sea and manna fell from the sky (cf.Exod. 16), and a dry rock, when struck, gushed water (cf. Exod. 17:6); and throughout the whole forty

years their clothes and shoes never wore out (cf. Deut. 8:4). What land was tilled

beside the brook Kerith whereElijah hid? Did not the ravens bring him food (cf. 1 Kgs. 17:6)? And when he came to Sarepta, did not the widow,despite her desperate need, give him bread, snatching it from the mouth other own children (cf. 1 Kgs. 17:10-16)?All this shows that we should seek holiness, not clothing, food and drink.

Strange though all these things may seem, they are by no means impossible. A man can live without eating if Godso wills. For how did Elijah complete a journey of forty days with the strength received from a single meal (cf. 1Kgs. 19:8)? And how did Moses remain on the mountain in communion with God for eighty days without tastinghuman food? After forty days he came down and, enraged by the image of the calf which the Israelites had made,immediately he broke the tablets of stone engraved with the Law and went back up the mountain, remaining therefor another forty days; and only then, after receiving two further tablets of stone, did he go down again to the people(cf. Exod. 24:12-18; 31:18-34: 3 5). How can the human mind explain this miracle? How did his bodily naturesurvive without anything to replenish its daily loss of strength? This enigma is solved by the divine Logos, when Hesays: 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God' (Matt. 4:4).

Why, then, do we drag the monastic way of life down from heaven to earth, burying ourselves in materialanxieties? Why do we who once were 'brought up in scarlet' now 'embrace dunghills', as Jeremiah says in hisLamentations (Lam. 4:5)? For when we are refreshed with radiant and fiery thoughts, we are 'brought up in scarlet';

but when we leave this state and involve ourselves in material things, we 'embrace dunghills'. Why do we abandonhope in God and rely on the strength of our own arm, ascribing the gifts of God's providence to the work of ourhands? Job considered that his greatest sin was to raise his hand to his mouth and kiss it (cf. Job 31: 27), but we feelno qualms in doing this. For many people are accustomed to kiss their hands, saying that it is their hands whichbring them prosperity. The Law refers to such people symbolically when it says: 'Whatever goes upon its paws isunclean', and 'whatever goes upon all fours or has many feet is always unclean' (cf. Lev. 11:27, 42). Now the phrase'goes upon its paws'

indicates someone who relies on his own hands and places all his hope in them, while to 'go on all fours' is to trust insensory things and continually to seduce one's intellect into worrying about them: and to have 'many feet' signifiesclinging to material objects.

This is why the author of Proverbs, speaking figuratively, does not wish the perfect man to have even two feet, butonly one, and this one seldom involving him in material things; for he says:

'Seldom set your foot within your friend's house, lest he grow weary of you, and so hate you' (Prov. 25:17. LXX).'You are my friends', says the Savior to His disciples (John 15:14); and if we try not to worry our friends about ourbodily needs, then we should only seldom trouble Christ about such matters; for if we keep worrying our friendsthey will come to hate us. What will our fate be, and how shall we escape condemnation, if we are constantlyoccupied with these bodily needs, and never stand upright or straighten our legs, so as to raise ourselves from theground? For our two legs together carry the whole mass of the body, and by crouching a little we are able to springupwards; and in the same way our faculty of discrimination, after stooping to attend to the needs of the body, canonce more look upwards unimpeded, separating itself from all worldly thoughts.

Standing upright, then, is characteristic of men who do not constantly indulge their lower impulses; it is alsocharacteristic of the angelic powers, because they have no need of physical things and feel no longing for them. Thatis what Ezekiel meant when he said: "Their legs were straight and their feet were winged' (Ezek. 1:7. LXX). Thissignifies the unbending steadfastness of their outlook and the swiftness of their movement towards spiritual things.Men, on the other hand, have been given legs that bend: in this way they can descend sometimes to fulfill the needsof the body, and at other times ascend to fulfill those of the soul. Because of the soul's kinship with the heavenlypowers, we should for the most part dwell with them on high; as regards the body, we should turn our attention tomaterial things only in so far as some necessity forces us to do so. But always to be creeping on the ground in searchof pleasure is defiling and degrading for someone with experience of spiritual knowledge.

Strictly speaking, we should call someone unclean, not because he

goes on all fours, but only if he does so continually; for God allows those who are in a body to attend from time totime to their bodily needs. Thus Jonathan, when fighting Nahash the Ammonite, gained the victory over him bymoving on all fours (cf. 1 Sam. 14:13); but he did this solely because he had to. When fighting the snake that creepson its belly - for this is what the name Nahash means - he was forced for a short time to do the same by going on allfours; and then, standing up again in the usual way, he easily defeated his opponent.

The story of Ish-bosheth also teaches us not to be over-anxious about bodily things, and not to rely on the sensesto protect us. He was a king who went to rest in his chamber, leaving a woman as door-keeper. When the men ofRechab came, they found her dozing off as she was winnowing wheat; so, escaping her notice, they slipped in andslew Ish-bosheth while he was asleep (cf 2 Sam. 4:5-8). Now when bodily concerns predominate, everything in manis asleep: the intellect, the soul and the senses. For the woman at the door winnowing wheat indicates the state ofone whose reason is closely absorbed in physical things and trying with persistent efforts to purify them. It is clearthat this story in Scripture should not be taken literally. For how could a king have a woman as doorkeeper, when heought properly to be guarded by a troop of soldiers, and to have round him a large body of attendants? Or how couldhe be so poor as to use her to winnow the wheat? But improbable details are often included in a story because of thedeeper truth they signify. Thus the intellect in each of us resides within like a king, while the reason acts as door-keeper of the senses. When the reason occupies itself with bodily things - and to winnow wheat is something bodily- the enemy without difficulty slips past unnoticed and slays the intellect. This is why Abraham did not entrust theguarding of the door to a woman, knowing that the senses are easily deceived; for they take pleasure in the sight ofsensory thmgs, and so divide the intellect and persuade it to share in sensual delights, although this is clearlydangerous. But Abraham himself sat by the door (cf. Gen. 18:1), allowing free entry to divine thoughts, whilebarring the way to worldly cares.

What advantage do we gain in life from all our useless toil over worldly things? Ts not all man's labor for the sakeof his mouth' (Eccles. 6:7)? Now, according to

the Apostle (1 Tim. 6:8), 'food

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and raiment' are all we need to maintain our humble flesh. Why, then, as Solomon asks, do we labor endlessly 'forthe wind' (Eccles. 5:16)? Through our anxiety about worldly things we hinder the soul from enjoying divineblessings and we bestow on the flesh greater care and comfort than are good for it. We nourish it with what isharmful and thus make it an adversary, so that it not only wavers in battle but, because of over-indulgence, it fightsvigorously against the soul, seeking honors and rewards. What in fact are the basic needs of the body that we use asa pretext when indulging an endless succession of desires? Simply bread and water. Well, do not the springs providerunning water in abundance, while bread is easily earned by those who have hands? In this way we can satisfy theneeds of the body, while suffering little or no distraction. And does our clothing call for much care? Again, no - ifwe reject a stupid conformity to fashion, and consider only our actual needs. For what fine-spun clothing, what linenor purple or silk did the first man wear? Did not the Creator command him to wear a coat of skins and to eat herbs(cf. Gen. 3:18, 21)? Such were the limits He set to the needs of the body - far different from the civilized

shamelessness of today.

I am not arguing here that He who feeds the birds of the air and clothes the lilies of the field with such glory willcertainly provide also for us if we pursue holiness: for those who are still far from real faith in God cannot as yet bepersuaded by this argument. But who, when asked, will refuse to give what is needful to one who lives a holy life?The barbarous Babylonians who took Jerusalem by force showed respect for the holiness of Jeremiah (cf Jer. 40:4-5), and provided him abundantly with all his bodily requirements, giving him not only food but the vessels withwhich it was the custom to serve guests. Surely, then, our own fellow-countrymen, since they are not totallybarbarous, will appreciate goodness and admire what is holy, and so will show respect for our ascetic life. Even ifthey themselves cannot follow the ascetic way owing to the weakness of their nature, at least they hold this way inhonor and venerate those who pursue it. What persuaded the Shunammite woman to build a chamber for Elisha, andto put there a table, bed and candlestick (cf. 2 Kgs. 4:10)? Was it not

Elisha's holiness? And what made the widow,when the whole country was ravaged by famine, place the needs of the Prophet before her own (cf. 1 Kgs. 17:10-16)?

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Had she not been amazed by Elijah's spiritual wisdom, she would not have deprived herself and her children of whatsmall material solace still remained to them, and given it to him. She expected in any case to die before long, but inher generosity to the stranger she was ready to do so even before the time came.

Men such as Elijah and Elisha became what they were through their courage, perseverance and indifference to thethings of this life. They practiced frugality: by being content with little they reached a state in which they wantednothing, and so came to resemble the bodiless angels. As a result, though outwardly insignificant and unnoticed,they became stronger than the greatest of earthly rulers: they spoke more boldly to crowned monarchs than any kingdoes to his own subjects. In what weapons or strength did Elijah trust when he rebuked Ahab, saying: Tt is not I whohave troubled Israel, but you and your father's house' (1 Kgs. 18:18)? How was Moses able to withstand Pharaohwhen he had nothing but holiness to give him courage (cf. Exod. 5)? When the armies of the kings of Israel andJudah were gathered for war, how did Elisha dare to say to Jehoram: 'As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom Istand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward you,nor see you' (2 Kgs. 3:14)? He was afraid neither of the assembled troops nor of the king's anger, which was likelyto flare up for no good reason in time of war, when his mind was confused and anxious. Can any king achieve whatholiness achieves? What robe of royal purple divided a river, as did the mantle of Elijah (cf. 2 Kgs. 2:8)? And whatroyal crown cured diseases, as did the handkerchiefs of the apostles (cf. Acts 19:12)? A solitary prophet oncecensured a king for his unlawful acts, when the king had his whole army with him. Incensed by the criticisms, theking stretched out his hand to seize the prophet: yet not only did he fail to catch hold of him, but he was unable todraw his hand back again, for it had withered (cf. 1 Kgs. 13:4). Here was a contest between holiness and a king'spower: and victory went to holiness. The prophet did not fight: it was holiness that routed the enemy. The combatanthimself did nothing while his faith acted. The king's allies stood by as judges of the contest:

and the king's handstuck fast, showing that holiness had won.

These holy men achieved such things because they had resolved to live for the soul alone, turning away from thebody and its

wants. The fact of needing nothing made them superior to aU men. They chose to forsake the body and to freethemselves from life in the flesh, rather than to betray the cause of holiness and, because of their bodily needs, toflatter the wealthy. But, as for us, when we lack something, instead of struggling courageously against ourdifficulties, we come fawning to the rich, like puppies wagging their tails in the hope of being tossed a bare bone orsome crumbs. To get what we want, we call them benefactors and protectors of Christians, attributing every virtue tothem, even though they may be utterly wicked. We do not investigate how the saints lived, although supposedly it isour aim to imitate their holiness.

Naaman, the commander of the Syrian army, came to Elisha with many gifts. And what did the prophet do? Didhe go out to meet him? Did he run towards him? No, he sent a lad to find out why Naaman had come, and did noteven admit him to his presence. This was to prevent anyone thinking that he had cured Naaman in return for the giftsthat he brought (cf 2 Kgs. 5:8-16). This story, without teaching us to be arrogant, shows us that we should notflatter, because of our needs, those who value highly the very things it is our vocation to despise.

Why do we forsake the pursuit of spiritual wisdom, and engage in agriculture and commerce? What can be betterthan to entrust our anxieties to God, so that He may help us with the farming? The soil is tilled and the seeds aresown by human effort: then God sends the rain, watering the seeds in the soft womb of the earth and enabling themto develop roots. He makes the sun rise, warming the soil, and with this warmth He stimulates the growth of theplants. He sends winds tempered to their development. When young shoots begin to come up. He fans them withgentle breezes, so that the crop is not scorched by hot streams of air. Then with steady winds He ripens the milkysubstance of the grains inside the husks. At threshing-time He provides fiery heat; for winnowing, suitable breezes.If one of these factors is missing, all our human toil is wasted: our

efforts achieve nothing when they are not sealedby God's gifts. Often, even when all these factors are present, a violent and untimely storm of rain spoils the grain asit is being threshed or when it has been heaped up clean. Sometimes, again, it is destroyed by worms in the granary:the table, as it were, is already laid and then the food is suddenly snatched from our very mouths. What,

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then, is the use of relying on our own efforts, since God controls the helm and directs all things as He wills?

We are apt to say that in sickness the body needs some relief. But is it not much better to die rather than dosomething unworthy of our vocation? In any case, if God wishes us to go on living, either He will give our bodyenough strength to bear the pain of the illness, and will reward us for our courage: or else He will find some way torelieve the pain, for the Fountain of Wisdom never lacks a remedy.

What we need to do above all else is to return to the blessed way of life followed by the first monks. This way caneasily be attained by all who wish. And then, if any suffering comes, it will not be fruitless; for there is this

consolation: that it corrects our faults and enables us to make progress. Such suffering also confers great benefit onthose who have embarked on the spiritual path but then abandoned it, in that it makes them return to this path oncemore.

Let us avoid staying in towns and villages; it is better for their inhabitants to come and visit us. Let us seek thewilderness and so draw after us the people who now shun us. For Scripture praises those who leave the cities anddwell in the rocks, and are like the dove' (cf. Jer. 48:28). John the Baptist lived in the wilderness and the populationof entire towns came out to him. Men dressed in garments of silk hastened to see his leather girdle, those who livedin houses with gilded ceilings chose to endure hardship in the open air: and rather than sleep on beds adorned withjewels they preferred to lie on the sand. All this they endured, although it was contrary to their usual habits; for intheir desire to see John the Baptist and in their wonder at his holiness they did not notice the hardships anddiscomfort. For holiness is held in higher honor than wealth; and the life of stillness wins greater fame than a largefortune. How many rich men there were

at that time, proud of their glory, and yet today they are quite forgotten;whereas the miraculous life of this humble desert-dweller is acclaimed until this day, and his memory is greatlyrevered by all. For the renown of holiness is eternal, and its intrinsic virtues proclaim its value.

Let us give up our flocks and herds, and so become real shepherds. Let us abandon sordid commerce, and soacquire the 'pearl of great price' (Matt. 13:46). Let us stop tilling the earth which 'brings forth thorns and thistles'(Gen. 3:18), and so become cultivators and keepers of paradise. Let us give up everything and choose the

life of stillness, and so put to silence those who now reproach us for owning possessions. The best way to abash ourcritics is discreetly to correct in ourselves the faults for which they revile us; for such a change in those reproachedputs their reproachers to shame.

There is another thing which in my opinion is truly disgraceful, and for which with good reason we are ridiculedby all. When someone has just entered the monastic life and has leamt merely about the outward practices ofasceticism - how and when monks pray, what they eat and how they dress - at once he claims to teach othersconcerning things he has not mastered himself. He goes about with a bevy of disciples, although himself stillneeding instruction; he thinks it easy to be a spiritual guide, not realizing that the care of other men's souls is of allthings the most difficult. For men must first be purified from old defilements, and then with close attention mustlearn about holiness. But when a person imagines that there is nothing beyond bodily ascetic practice, how will hecorrect the moral character of his pupils? How will he refashion those enslaved to evil habits? How will he helpthose attacked by the passions, when he knows nothing about mental warfare? How will he heal the wounds theyreceive when fighting, since he himself lies wounded and is in need of aid?

To master any art requires time and much instruction; can the art of arts alone be mastered without being leamt?No one without experience would go in for farming; nor would someone who has never been taught medicine try topractice as a doctor. The first would be condemned for making good farmland barren and

weed-infested; the second,for making the sick worse instead of better. The only art which the uninstructed dare to practice, because they think

it the simplest of all, is that of the spiritual way. What is difficult the majority regard as easy; and what Paul says hehas not yet apprehended (cf Phil. 3:12), they claim to know through and through, although they do not know eventhis: that they are totally ignorant.

This is why the monastic life has come to be treated with contempt, and those who follow it are mocked byeveryone. For who would not laugh when he sees someone who yesterday served in a tavern, posing today as ateacher of virtue, surrounded by pupils? Or when he sees a man who has just left a life of civic dishonesty

now swaggering all over the market-place with a crowd of disciples? If such people realized clearly how muchpainful toil is required to guide others on the spiritual way, and if they knew the risks involved, they would certainlyabandon the task as beyond their powers. But because they remain ignorant of this and regard it as a glory to be theguide of others, they will when the moment comes tumble headlong into the pit. They think nothing of leaping into aburning furnace. They provoke laughter in those who know their previous life, and arouse God's anger by theirfoolhardmess. Because Eli failed to correct his children, nothing could avert God's wrath from him - neither hisvenerable old age, nor his past freedom of communion with God, nor the honor due to his priesthood (cf 1 Sam.2:12, 29; 4:18). How, then, will they escape His wrath whose previous actions have not commended them to God,who understand neither the workings of sin nor how to correct it, and who embark on this dangerous task withoutexperience, incited by love for glory?

At first sight it seems that the only teachers our Lord had in mind were the Pharisees when He said: 'Woe to you,scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you scour sea and land to gain one proselyte, and when he is gained, youmake him twice as much the child of hell as yourselves' (Matt. 23:15) But in reality, by rebuking the Pharisees inthis way. He was warning those who in the future would fall into the same mistake; so that, heeding His words 'Woeto you . . .',

from fear of His condemnation they would restrain their improper desire for human glory. They shouldalso recall the example of Job, and either care for their disciples as he cared for his children, or else renounce allclaim to give spiritual direction. Wishing his sons to be free from sins in their mind. Job offered sacrifices every dayon their behalf in case, as he said, 'my sons have thought evil in their minds against God' (Job 1:5. LXX). But thesemen cannot discern even outward sins, because their intelligence is still obscured by dust from the battle which theyare waging against the passions. How, then, do they rashly take upon themselves the direction and cure of others,when as yet they have not cured their own passions, and when they cannot lead others to victory, since they have notyet gained the victory for themselves? First we must struggle against our own passions, watching and keeping inmind the course of the battle; and then on the basis of personal experience

we can advise others about this warfare, and render victory easier for them by describing the tactics beforehand.

There are some who gain control over their passions by practicing great austerities: but, as happens in skirmishesby night, they do not know how victory was won, and have no clear idea of the snares laid against them by theenemy. This is indicated symbolically by what Joshua did: while his army was crossing the Jordan at night, heordered his men to take stones out of the river, set them up on the bank, and then cover them with whitewash andwrite on them how they had passed over the Jordan (cf Josh. 4: 2-9). By this he signified that the hidden thoughtsunderlying our passionate behavior should be brought into the open and pilloried, and that we should not mindsharing this knowledge with others. In this way, not only will the one who has crossed know how he did it, butothers who wish to do the same will cross more easily because they have been instructed. Through such experiencethe first teaches others.

But these self-appointed teachers lack personal experience, and do not even listen when others speak to them.Relying solely on their own self-assurance, they order their brethren to wait on them like slaves. They glory in thisone thing: to have many disciples. Their main objective is to ensure that, when they go about in public, their retinueof followers is no smaller than those of their rivals.

They behave like mountebanks rather than teachers. They thinknothing of giving orders, however burdensome, but they fail to teach others by their own conduct. Thus they maketheir purpose obvious to all: they have insinuated themselves into a position of leadership, not for the benefit of theirdisciples, but to promote their own pleasure.

They should learn from Abimelech and Gideon that it is not words but actions that inspire people to follow aleader. Abimelech prepared a load of wood, then laid it on his own shoulders, saying: 'Make haste, and do what youhave seen me do' (Judg. 9:48). Gideon also shared tasks with his men and by his. own example showed them what todo, saying: 'Look at me, and do the same'' (Judg. 7:17). Similarly, the Apostle said: 'These hands have ministered tomy necessities, and to those who were with me' (Acts 20:34), while the Lord Himself first acted and then taught. Allthis proves that it is more convincing to teach through actions than through words.

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But false teachers are blind to such examples, and arrogantly tell men what to do. Imagining that they knowsomething about these matters at second hand, they are like the inexperienced shepherds who were rebuked by theprophet for carrying a sword on their arm:

'The sword is on their arm ... and their right eye will be blinded'' (cf Zech. 11:17. LXX). For in their foolishnessthey have neglected right action, and so they have extinguished the light of contemplation. Yet as shepherds they areharsh and inhuman whenever they can inflict punishment. So their contemplative understanding is immediatelydestroyed, and then their actions, deprived of this understanding, prove misguided: for those who do not gird theirsword to their thigh but carry it on their arm can neither do nor see anything. To 'gird the sword to the thigh' meansto use the incisive power of the intelligence to cut off one's own passions, while to bear it 'on the arm' means to havepunishment ready for the sinful acts of others. Thus Nahash the Ammonite, whose name means 'snake', threatenedthe Israelites gifted with contemplative insight, that he would put out all their right eyes (cf. 1 Sam. 11:2), thusdepriving them of any right understanding to lead them to right action. He knew that when people proceed fromcontemplation to action, this right understanding enables them to make

great progress. The action is good because ithas first been contemplated by the clear-sighted eyes of spiritual knowledge.

Experience shows that the task of guiding others should be undertaken by someone who is equable and has nopersonal advantage in view. For such a person, having tasted stillness and contemplation, and begun in somemeasure to be inwardly at peace, will not choose to entangle his intellect with bodily cares: he will not want to turnit away from knowledge and drag it down from the spiritual to the material. This point is underlined in the well-known parable which Jotham told the men of Shechem: 'Once upon a time the trees went out to anoint a king overthem: and they said ... to the vine, "Come and reign over us." And the vine said to them: "Should I leave my wine,which cheers God and man, and go to be promoted over the trees?"' Similarly, the fig-tree declined because of itssweetness, and the olive because of its own good qualities. Then a bramble, a barren plant full of thorns, acceptedthe sovereignty which they offered, though it possessed neither a special good quality of its own, nor those of thetrees that were to be subject to it (cf. Judg.

9:7-15). Now in this parable the trees which sought a ruler were not cultivated but wild. The vine, the fig-tree andthe olive refused to rule over the wild trees, preferring to bear their own fruits rather than to occupy a position ofauthority. Likewise, those who perceive in themselves some fruit of virtue and feel its benefit, refuse to assumeleadership even when pressed by others, because they prefer this benefit to receiving honor from men.

The curse which befell the trees in the parable also falls on these people who act in a similar way. 'Let fire comeout of the bramble.' it says, 'and devour the trees of the forest: or let. it come out of the trees and devour thebramble.' For when these people make a harmful agreement, inevitably it proves dangerous not only to those whoplace themselves under an inexperienced teacher, but equally to the teacher who assumes authority over inattentivedisciples. The teacher's ineptitude destroys the disciples, and the disciples' negligence endangers the teacher,especially when, because of his ineptitude, they grow lazy. For it is the teacher's duty to notice and correct all hisdisciples' faults, and it is the disciples' duty to obey all his instructions. It is a serious and dangerous thing both forthem

to commit sins and for him to overlook them.

Let no one imagine that to be a spiritual guide is an excuse for ease and self-indulgence, for nothing is sodemanding as the charge of souls. Those who have charge of horses and other animals keep them under control, andso they generally achieve their purpose. But to govern men is harder, because of the variety of their characters andtheir deliberate cunning. Anyone undertaking this task must prepare himself for a severe struggle. He must treat thefaults of all with great forbearance, and patiently teach them things of which in their ignorance they are not aware.

This is the reason why, in the temple, oxen support the basin for washing (cf 1 Kgs. 7:25): and why the wholecandlestick was made of solid enchased gold (cf. Exod. 25:31). Now the candlestick signifies that whoever intendsto enlighten others must be altogether solid and firmly based, and have nothing about him empty or hollow;everything in him which is superfluous and cannot serve others as an example of holiness must be cut away. And theoxen supporting the basin signify that anyone undertaking this work should not avoid what comes to him, but oughtto bear the burdens and the defilement of those weaker than himself, so long as it is safe for him to do so.

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For if he is going to purify the actions of those who come to him, he must to some degree himseU" share theirdefilement, just as a basin of water, while cleaning the hands of those who wash, itself receives their dirt. For onewho speaks about the passions and wipes others clean of their stain cannot escape undefiled, since the act of dis-cussing them inevitably defiles the mind of the speaker. And even though he does not depict the sins in vivid colors,yet by speaking about them he stains the surface of his intellect.

The spiritual director must also possess knowledge of all the devices of the enemy, so that he can forewarn thoseunder his charge about snares of which they are unaware, thus enabling them to gain victory without difficulty. Sucha person is rare and not easily found. It is true that Paul says of himself: 'We are not ignorant of Satan's devices' (2Cor. 2:11); but Job asks in perplexity: 'Who will reveal the face of his garment? And who can enter within the foldsof his

breastplate? Who will open the doors of his face?' (Job 41:13-14 [41.-4-5. LXX]). What he means is somethinglike this: Satan has no visible Face, for he conceals his cunning beneath many garments. He deceitfully entices menwith his outward appearance, while lying in wait secretly and devising their destruction. And Job, to show that hehimself is not ignorant of Satan's ways, speaks clearly about his sinister powers, saying: 'His eyes are like themorning star, but his inward parts are asps' (Job 41:18 [41:10, 6. LXX]). All this he says to expose the devil'swickedness. For Satan entices men by simulating the beauty of the morning star, and when they draw near, heschemes to kill them with the asps inside him.

There is a proverb which emphasizes the hazards involved in undertaking spiritual direction: 'He who chopswood is in danger if the head of the axe flies off (Eccles. 10:9-10. LXX). For when someone makes distinctionsbetween things that are generally thought to be the same, trying to show the fundamental difference between what isapparently and what is really good, he rans a grave risk: if he makes a mistake, he will lead his hearers into error.Remember how one of Elisha's followers was cutting wood by the Jordan, and the head of his axe flew off and fellinto the river. Realizing that he was in trouble - for the axe had been borrowed - he cried out to his teacher: 'Alas,master!' (2 Kgs. 6: 5). The same thing happens to those who try to teach on the basis of what they

have wrongly understood from others, and who cannot complete the task because they do not speak from personalexperience. Half-way through they are discovered to be contradicting themselves; and then they admit theirignorance, finding themselves in trouble because their teaching is merely borrowed.

In the Biblical story Elisha then threw a stick into the Jordan and brought to the surface the axe-head his disciplehad lost (cf 2 Kgs. 6:6); that is to say, he revealed a thought which his disciple believed to be hidden deep withinhim and he exposed it to the view of those present. Here the Jordan signifies speaking about repentance, for it was inthe Jordan that John performed the baptism of repentance. Now if someone does not speak accurately aboutrepentance, but makes his listeners despise it by failing to communicate its hidden power, he lets the axe-head fallinto the Jordan. But then a stick - and this signifies the Cross -

brings the axe-head up from the depths to the surface.For prior to the Cross the full meaning of repentance was hidden, and anyone who tried to say something about it

could easily be convicted of speaking rashly and inadequately. After the Crucifixion, however, the meaning ofrepentance became clear to all, for it had been revealed at the appointed time through the wood of the Cross.

My aim in saying all this is not to discourage people from assuming the spiritual direction of beginners, but tourge them first to acquire the inward state needed for so great a task, and not to undertake it without adequatepreparation. They should not think of the pleasures they will enjoy - disciples to wait on them, praise from outsiders-and so overlook the dangers involved. Before peace has been established, they should not turn the weapons of warinto tools for cultivation. When a man has subdued all the passions, is no longer troubled by warfare, and is notforced to use weapons in self-defense, then he may properly undertake the direction of others. But so long as thepassions oppress us and we are involved in carnal war against the will of the flesh, we should constantly keep holdof our weapons: otherwise our enemies will take advantage of our relaxation and overpower us without a fight

In order to encourage those who have Struggled successfully to attain holiness, but who in their great humilitythink that they are not yet victorious. Scripture says: 'Beat your swords into ploughshares, and your spears intopruning hooks' (cf. Isa. 2: 4). This

means that they should stop worrying pointlessly about their defeated enemies, and should for the benefit of othersre-equip the powers of their soul, diverting them from warfare to the cultivation of those still rank with the weeds ofwickedness. But Scripture gives the opposite advice to those who, before reaching this stage, through inexperienceor foolishness undertake what lies beyond their power: for to them it says: 'Beat your ploughshares into swords, andyour prunmg-hooks into spears' (Joel 3:10). For what is the use of farming when there is war in the land, and theproduce will be enjoyed by the enemy, not by those who did the work? This is probably why the Israelites, so longas they

were fighting various nations in the desert, were not permitted to take up farming, since this would havehindered them as soldiers. But once they had made peace with the enemy, they were allowed to engage in farming:for they had been told that until they entered the promised land they should do no planting. Understandably, theentry must precede the planting: for when a man has not yet reached perfection and lacks stability, the qualities hetries to implant in others will not take root.

In the spiritual life, more than anywhere else, the proper order and sequence must be observed from the start.Guests at a dinner may not like the introductory dishes and may feel more attracted by what comes later, but they areforced to comply with the order of the courses. Likewise Jacob despised Leah's ugly eyes and was more attracted byRachel's beauty: but first he had to serve seven years to gain Leah (cf. Gen. 29:15-28). To become a true monk aman should not work backwards from the end to the beginning, but start at the beginning and so advance towardsperfection. In this way he will himself gain what he seeks, and will also be able to guide his disciples to holiness.

Most people, however, without exerting any effort or making any real progress, small or great, in the practice ofvirtue, simply chase after the status of spiritual director, not realizing how dangerous this is. When others urge themto undertake the work of teaching, they do not refuse: indeed, they even wander about the back streets, recruitinganyone they find, and they promise all kinds of perquisites, as if making a contract with servants about food and

clothing. Spiritual directors of this kind like to appear in public supported by a large crowd of attendants, and tohave all the outward pomp of an

abbot, as if playing a part on the stage. So as not to lose the services of their disciples, they are forced to keep ongratifying their whims. They are like a charioteer who drops the rems and lets his horses go where they like. Theirdisciples are allowed to run wild: carried away by their desires, they fall over precipices or stumble at every obstaclein their path, because there is no one to stop them or to restrain their disordered impulses.

Such teachers should note how Ezekiel condemns those who indulge the

pleasures of others. In giving way toeveryone's wishes they are treasuring up future punishment for themselves. 'Woe to the women that sew patches onevery elbow,' says Ezekiel, 'and put veils on the heads of people of every age ... so as to slay souls for a handful ofbarley and a piece of bread' (Ezek. 13:18-19. LXX). These false teachers are acting similarly, for they supply theirbodily needs from the contributions of their disciples and wear clothes sewn together as it were from rags. Bymaking others put veils on their heads they bring shame upon them, for men ought to pray or prophesy with theirheads uncovered (cf. 1 Cor. 11:4); they render them effeminate and destroy souls that ought not to die.

Instead of doing this they ought to obey the true teacher Christ, and to refuse, as far as possible, to assume thedirection of others. For He says to His disciples: 'Do not be called Rabbi' (Matt. 13:8). And if He admonished Peterand John and the rest of the apostles to avoid such work and to consider themselves unworthy of such a position,how can anyone imagine himself superior to them and claim for himself the office from which they were debarred?For in saying 'Do not be called Rabbi', He does not mean that we are free to assume the office so long as we avoidthe title.

But what if someone, not from any choice of his own, is obliged to accept one or two disciples, and so to becomethe spiritual director of others as well? First, let him examine himself carefully, to see whether he can teach themthrough his actions rather than his words, setting his own life before them as a model of holiness. He must take carethat, through copying him, they do not obscure the beauty of holiness with the ugliness of sin. He should also realizethat he ought to work as hard for his disciples' salvation as he does for his own; for, having once acceptedresponsibility for them, he will be accountable to God for them as well as for himself. That is why the saints tried toleave behind them disciples whose

holiness was no less than their own, and to change these disciples from their original condition to a better state. ThusPaul the Apostle changed Onesmius from a runaway slave into a martyr (cf Philem. 10-19); Elijah turned Elishafrom a ploughman into a prophet (cf. 1 Kgs. 19:19); Moses transmitted special gifts to Joshua, though he was

younger than all the rest (of. Deut. 31:7-8); and Eli made Samuel greater than himself (of. 1 Sam. 3:19-20). In eachof these cases the disciple was helped by his own efforts, but the chief cause of his progress was the fact that he hadfound a teacher capable of fanning the smoldering spark of his zeal and of kindling it into flame. So these teachersbecame God's spokesmen, communicating His will to others; for God says: 'If you bring forth the precious from thevile, you shall be as My mouth' (Jer. 15:19).

God also showed Ezekiel what the teacher's attitude should be, and what kind of change he should bring about inhis disciples: 'Son of man,' He says, 'take a tile, and lay it before you, and portray upon it the city, even Jerusalem'(Ezek. 4:1). This means that the teacher should transform his disciple from clay into a holy temple. The words 'andlay it before you' are particularly significant, for the disciple will quickly improve if he is continually in the sight ofhis teacher. The constant influence of a good example marks other souls with its own impress, so long as they arenot completely stubborn and insensitive. The reason Gehazi and Judas succumbed, the first to theft and the second totreachery, was that they withdrew from the sight of their teachers: had they remained under the restraining influenceof their teacher's eye, they would not have sinned.

God likewise indicates that the disciples' negligence endangers the teacher himself, when He says: 'And you shallset a frying-pan between yourself and the tile; and it shall be a wall between the tile and you' (cf. Ezek. 4:3). For ifthe teacher wishes to avoid the punishment suffered by a lazy disciple whom he has changed from clay into a city,he should tell this disciple of the chastisement that awaits those who relapse; and then his words of warning willserve as a wall, separating the innocent from the guilty. That is what God means when He says to Ezekiel: 'Son ofman, I have set you as a watchman over the house of Israel; and if you see the sword threatening one of them and donot give him warning, and he dies, I will require his soul at your hand' (cf. Ezek. 3:17-18).

Moses made such a wall for himself when he said to the Israelites:

'Watch yourselves, so that you do not try to follow them after they have been destroyed before you' (Deut. 12:30.LXX). For if someone does not watch his

mind attentively, he will find that, after he has cut down the passions, theimages of past fantasies begin to emerge again like young shoots. If he constantly allows these images to force theirway into his intellect and does not bar their entry, the passions will once more establish themselves within him;despite his previous victory, he will have to struggle against them again. For, after being tamed and taught to grazelike cattle, the passions can become savage once more through our negligence and regain the ferocity of wild beasts.It is to prevent this that Scripture says: 'Do not try to follow them after they have been destroyed before you'; that is,we must not allow our soul to form the habit of taking pleasure in fantasies of this kind, and so to relapse into itsprevious wickedness.

Realizing this, Jacob hid the images of the strange gods at Shechem, and 'destroyed them up to the present day'(Gen. 35:4. LXX); for he knew that to look at such things and constantly to think about them harms the mind byimpressing upon it clear and distinct images of shameful fantasies. Our struggle against the passions should hide anddestroy them, not just for a short time, but 'up to the present day', that is, for all time; since 'the present day' is co-extensive with every age, always referring to the present moment. Now Shechem means 'to shoulder', thus

signifying the struggle against the passions. Joseph was sent to Shechem and fought an arduous battle there againstthe passions (cf Gen. 37:12-28). Likewise Jacob said that he took Shechem by sword and bow (cf Gen. 34: 26),meaning that he subdued the passions after a hard struggle, hiding them in the earth at Shechem.

Now there is evidently a difference between hiding gods at Shechem and placing an idol in a secret place. Thefirst action is praised while the second is condemned, for Scripture says: 'Cursed is he who puts an idol in a secretplace' (cf. Deut. 27:15A To hide something completely in the earth is not the same as putting it in a secret place; forwhat is hidden in the earth and no longer perceived by the senses is in time erased even from the memory, whereaswhat is put in a secret place may escape the attention of others, but it is constantly seen by whoever put it there, andso the memory of it is kept fresh, since it is carried about secretly as an

image in the mind. Every shameful thought formed in the mind is a secret idol. If it is disgraceful to disclose suchthoughts to others, it is also dangerous to set them as an idol in a secret place: and it is even more dangerous tosearch for images that have already been made to disappear, since our mind readily inclines towards a passion thatwe have previously expelled, and we are drawn towards it by sensual pleasure.

From this we may understand that virtue is a thing most delicately balanced, and that if neglected it quickly turnsinto its opposite. Scripture seems to refer to this symbolically, saying: 'The land into which you go so as to inherit itis a land subject to change through the movement of the peoples' (Ezra 9:11. LXX). For as soon as someone who hasattained the state of virtue inclines towards its opposite, his virtue is thereby altered, being "a land subject to change'.So from the moment that harmful fantasies appear we should deny them entry into our mind. We should not allow itto 'go down into Egypt', for from there it is led away into captivity by the Assyrians (cf. Jer. 42 :19; 43:2-3). Forwhen the mind descends into the darkness of impure thoughts — and that is what Egypt means — then the passionsdrag it forcibly and against its will into their service.

This is why the Lawgiver, symbolically commanding us to deny entry to sensual pleasure, told us to watch thehead of the serpent, because it is watching our heel (cf. Gen. 3:15). Its aim is to bite our heel and so to poison us;whereas our aim is to crush every provocation to sensual pleasure, for when the provocation is crushed, sensualityhas little power over us. Samson surely would not have been able to bum the Philistines' crops unless he had firstturned the foxes' heads in opposite directions, tied their tails together, and put a burning torch between them (cf.Judg. 15:4). This means that we should learn to detect the attack of deceitful thoughts from premonitory signs and towatch their first beginnings, which they contrive to make attractive in appearance so as to attain their end; then wecan expose the wickedness of these thoughts by comparing their first beginnings with the final results. This is to tiethe tails together and to set between them a torch, thus showing things up for what they are.

To clarify what has been said, let us take two examples. Often the vice of unchastity has its first beginning in self-esteem; the gateway at the entrance appears attractive, but hidden behind it lies

the destructive path that leads the mindless into the realm of death. Under the influence of self-esteem, a man mayperhaps enter the priesthood or the life of monastic perfection: and because many come to him for help, his self-esteem makes him think highly of himself thanks to what he says and does. So, by beguiling him with suchthoughts, self-esteem draws him far away from the inner watchfulness that he should possess. Then it suggests tohim that he should meet a woman of supposedly holy life, and so leads him to assent to an act of carnal lust,depriving his conscience of its intimate communion with God and plunging it into abject disgrace. To 'tie tail to tail'like Sampson, let us reflect how this man's thought began and where it led him; and let us consider how he waspunished for his self-esteem by falling into a shameful act of unchastity. Then we shall see clearly the contrastbetween the beginning and the end, and the way they are linked together.

To take a second example: the vice of gluttony can lead to that of unchastity: and this in turn can lead to the viceof dejection. For as soon as one who has been overcome by the vice of unchastity regains the state of innerwatchfulness, he is filled with despondency and dejection. When pursuing the spiritual way, therefore, we shouldnot be influenced by the pleasures of eating or the allurements of sensuality, but should consider where they bothend up. And when we find that they lead to dejection, we have 'tied tail to tail' and, by showing things up for whatthey are, we have set the crops of the Philistines on fire with a burning torch.

Since warfare against the passions requires such knowledge and experience, anyone who assumes the task ofspiritual direction should realize how much he needs to know in order to lead those under his charge to 'the prize ofthe high calling' (Phil. 3:14), and to teach them clearly all that this warfare entails. He should not pretend to gain thevictory by shadow-boxing, but must engage in a real battle with the enemy and inflict deadly wounds upon him.This struggle is far harder than any gymnastic contest. When an athlete's body is thrown to the ground, he can easilyget up: but in the spiritual warfare it is men's souls that fall, and then it is very difficult for them to rise once more.

If a man, while still battling against the passions and stained with blood, tries to build a temple of God out ofsouls made in the divine image, he should listen to these words: 'You shall not build Me

a temple, because you are a man of blood' (cf. 1 Chr. 22:8). To build a temple for God one must be in a state ofpeace. Moses took the tabernacle and pitched it outside the camp (cf. Exod. 33:7): this shows that the teacher mustbe far removed from the tumult of war and the confusion of the camp, and must have attained a peaceful andunwarlike state.

But even when such teachers have been found, they require disciples who have renounced themselves and theirown will, so as to become exactly like dead bodies or the raw material in the craftsman's hand. Just as the soul actsas it wishes in the body, without the body offering any opposition, and just as the raw material does not resist the

craftsmarL when he demonstrates his skill by working upon it, so disciples should be obedient to their teacher whenhe is guiding them to holiness, and should not contradict him in any way. If they become over-curious about themanner in which he is performing his task and start questioning his instructions, they hinder their own progress.

What seems reasonable and convincing to the inexperienced is not necessarily correct. The skilled craftsmanjudges things quite differently from the unskilled man, for the first is guided by precise knowledge, the second bywhat seems to him probable. Now probability relies on guesswork and is usually wrong, for it is closely related toerror. For example, when a ship is sailing close to the wind, the helmsman tells the people on board to do whatseems the more improbable: to leave the side of the ship which has risen up out of the water and against which thewind is exerting greater pressure, and to sit on the side which is dipping down into the waves. Considerations ofprobability would lead us to expect exactly the opposite advice. Nevertheless, those who are in the ship obey thehelmsman rather than their own ideas: of necessity they defer to the skill of the man in charge, however questionablehis instructions may appear. Surely, then, those who have entrusted their salvation to others should abandon allnotions of probability and submit to the skill of the expert, judging his knowledge more trustworthy than their ownopinions.

Those who renounce the world should in the first place make sure that they keep

back nothing. They should fearthe terrible example of Ananias, who thought that no one would notice if he kept back something for himself, andwho was condemned by God for stealing

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(cf. Acts 5:1-10). They should renounce not only themselves but everything they have, knowing that whatever theyretain will form an object of continuing attraction to their minds, and so will draw them away from higher things andeventually cut them off altogether from the brotherhood. Let us recall the lives of the men of old, written by theHoly Spirit: here appropriate examples can be found to bring each man to the truth, whatever his way of life. WhenElisha placed himself under his teacher, how did he renounce the world? Scripture says that he was plowing withtwelve pairs of oxen before him, and that he killed the cattle, made a fire of their harness, and roasted them (cf. 1Kgs. 19:19, 21). This gives us some idea how eager he was. He did not say, T shall sell the harness and distribute themoney appropriately'; he did not calculate that the things would do more good if sold. Entirely absorbed by hisdesire to join his teacher, he despised all visible things and sought to get rid of them, because they would distracthim from his intention:

and he knew that delay often leads to a change of mind. And why did the Lord, when He spoke to the rich manabout the life of perfection ordained by God, instruct him to sell his possessions and give the money to the poor,keeping back nothing for himself (cf. Matt. 19:21)? Was it not because He knew that anything kept back would giverise to all kinds of distractions? And I think that when Moses requires those who wish to sanctify themselvesthrough intense prayer to shave their entire body, he is likewise demanding the complete renunciation of possessions(cf Num. 8:7).

In the second place, those embracing the monastic life should forget their relatives and friends to such an extentthat they are never troubled at all by memories of them. When the Ark was being pulled in a cart by two cows, itmade them forget their own nature. Their calves had been taken from them and shut up at home, and there was noone driving the cows: yet they finished the journey

without making a mistake, turning aside to neither right nor left(cf. 1 Sam. 6:12). Though distressed by the separation from their calves, they did not moo: though laboring under

the weight of the Ark and subject to the tyranny of their natural instincts, they kept to the direct route as thoughwalking along a straight line, so o\'erwhelming was their reverence for the Ark that was in the cart. If cows acted inthis manner, should not equal reverence be shown by those who have undertaken to carry the spiritual Ark? Indeed,their

reverence should be far greater; otherwise human nature formed in God's image would be surpassed by the beasts,for men would be failing to do by conscious choice what animals did by necessity.

Perhaps the reason why Joseph wandered in the desert was because he sought to attain perfection withoutrenouncing the bonds of kinship (cf. Gen. 37:15-16). Thus the man who asked him the reason for his wanderinggathered from his answer that it was his attachment to his relatives, and not the fact that he was a shepherd: for hesaid: 'I seek my brethren, tell me, I pray you, where they feed their flocks.' But had he possessed a trueunderstanding of the shepherd's art, he would have said 'tend' and not 'feed'. The man answered: 'They have goneaway; for I heard them say. Let us go to Dothan' (Gen. 37:17). Now Dothan means 'sufficient detachment'; and sothe man's answer teaches one who is still wandering because of attachment to his relatives that it is not possible toattain perfection unless one has fully abandoned all such attachment. It is not enough to depart from Haran (cf Gen.29:4), a name which means 'caves', and so signifies the senses. Again, it is not enough to go put from the valley ofHebron (cf. Gen. 37:14), that is, of humble works, and to leave the desert in which those who seek perfection arestill wandering. For unless we reach Dothan — that is, attain sufficient detachment - we gain nothing from ourefforts; if bonds of kinship still hold us under their spell, we shall fail to attain perfection. Indeed, the Lord himselfstrongly urged us to abandon bonds of kinship; for He rebuked Mary the Mother of God because she sought Himamong His relatives (cf Luke 2:49), and He said that whoever loves father and mother more than Him is unworthyofHim(cf Matt. 10:37).

After they have succeeded in these two things, those who have only recently escaped from the agitation of theworld should be advised to practice stillness; otherwise, by frequently going out, they will reopen the woundsinflicted on their mind through the senses. They should take care not to add new images to their old fantasies. Thosewho have only just renounced the world find stillness hard to practice, for memory now has time to stir up all thefilth that is within them, whereas previously it had no chance to do this because of their many preoccupations. But,though hard to practice, stillness will in time free the intellect from being disturbed by impure thoughts. Since theaim is to cleanse the soul and purify it

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from all defilement, such people should avoid everything that makes it unclean. They should keep their intelligencein a state of profound calm, far from all that irritates it, and should refrain from talking with men of frivolouscharacter. They should embrace solitude, the mother of wisdom.

If these people mix freely with the confusion of the outside world, it is easy for them to be caught again in thesnares from which they thought they had escaped. When one is aiming at holiness it is useless to indulge in the verythings one has condemned and run away from. But such is the force of habit that they are in danger of losing thestillness which they have acquired with so much effort, and of reverting to their shameful ways, reviving memoriesof forgotten sins. The intellect of someone who has lately withdrawn from sin is like a body that has begun torecover from a protracted illness: when the physical organism is in this state, something quite trivial is enough tocause a relapse, since it has not yet fully regained its strength. Likewise, when a man has only just embarked on themonastic life, the sinews of his intellect are weak and flabby and there is a danger that his passions will return, forthey are naturally aroused by contact with the tumult of the world outside. That is why Moses ordered those whowished to escape the destroying angel to stay indoors, saying: 'None of you shall go out of the door of his house, lestthe destroyer touch him" (cf Exod. 12:22-23). Jeremiah, too, seems to give the same advice: 'Do not go out into thefield, or walk by the way, for the sword of the enemy ... is on every side' (Jer. 6:25).

A veteran of tested courage goes out to engage the enemy at close quarters, but

anyone incapable of fightingshould stay at home out of harm's way, keeping safe from danger by remaining quiet and in stillness. Joshua, the sonof Nun, acted in this way; for it is written: 'His servant Joshua, a young man, did not go out of the tabernacle' (Exod.33:11). He knew from the story of Abel that those who go out into the battlefield and engage prematurely in thefight are killed by their relatives and friends (cf. Gen. 4:8). The same lesson may be learnt from the story of Dinah(cf. Gen. 34: Iff). It is the mark of a girlish mind for one to attempt things beyond one's power, and falsely toimagine that one's own resources are adequate. If Dinah had not rashly gone to see what was going on in theneighborhood, supposing herself strong enough to resist its

attractions, her soul's judgment would not have been seduced by sensory things and corrupted before growing tomaturity; for her lawful husband, the spiritual power of the intelligence, was not yet known to her. Wishing touproot this passion of presumption that has established itself within man, God said to Moses: 'Fill the children ofIsrael with a spirit of reverence' (Lev. 15:31. LXX). For rashly to undertake tasks beyond one's power is contrary tothe spirit of reverence.

Before we are properly trained, then, we should avoid the agitation of city life and keep our minds far from alldistracting noise. It is no great gain to renounce things, and then to listen all the time to gossip about them - to leavethe city and its activities, and yet to sit at the gate like Lot (cf Gen. 19:1) and be filled with the tumult that comesfrom inside. But like Moses we should abandon the city altogether, avoiding not only its activities but also any talkabout them. 'When I depart from the city', says Moses, 'and stretch out my hands, the sounds will cease' (Exod. 9:29.LXX).

When we not only refrain from worldly actions but no longer call them to mind, we have attained true tranquility.This gives the soul the opportunity to look at the impressions previously stamped on the mind, and to struggleagainst each one and eliminate it. So long as we go on receiving new impressions, our intelligence is occupied withthem and so it is not possible to erase the earlier ones. In consequence our struggle to eradicate the passions isinevitably far harder, since these passions have become strong through being allowed to increase gradually;

and

now, like a river in full flood, they drown the soul's discernment with one fantasy after another.

If we want to make a river-bed dry, perhaps to investigate something of interest, it is no use drawing off the waterin the particular place where we imagine the thing to be, since more water keeps flowing down. But if we cut off theflow from above, the river-bed becomes dry without any further effort on our part: the water automatically runsaway, and so we can examine what interests us. Likewise, as soon as the senses are no longer supplying materialfrom outside, it becomes easy to empty our mind of the impressions that produce the passions. But when the senseskeep conveying a constant stream of impressions, it 'is not just difficult but completely impossible to free theintellect from this inundation.

Now when we are continually meeting other people, we are not

consciously troubled by the passions, because they lack the opportunity to become active: yet they persist unnoticedwithin us, and the longer they remain, the stronger they grow. If the ground is constantly trodden underfoot, theweeds, though present in it, do not rise above the surface; but they thrust vigorous and thriving roots deep into theearth, and then, as soon as they get the chance, they shoot up above ground. Similarly, if we are always meetingother people, the passions are prevented from emerging into the open; nevertheless they grow steadily morepowerful and then, taking advantage of the life of stillness which we have begun to pursue, they attack us with greatforce. Our struggle with them is hard and dangerous because we failed to fight against them when they firstoccurred.

That is why the prophet commanded the Israelites to 'destroy the seed from Babylon' (Jer. 50:16 [27:16. LXX]),meaning that we should erase sense-impressions before they penetrate into the mind. For if we let them enter theearth of our mind and grow, and if we allow them to be watered with violent rains by repeatedly thinking aboutthem, they will produce a plentiful crop of evil. The Psalms praise those who do not wait for the passions to grow tofull strength but kill them in infancy: 'Blessed is he who seizes your little ones and dashes them

against the rock' (Ps.137:9). Perhaps Job, too, is hinting at some such thing when, reflecting on the course of his life, he says that the rushand the flag flourish in the river, but wither when deprived of water (cf Job. 8:11). And his statement that the 'ant-lion has perished for lack of food' (Job 4:11. LXX) would seem to have a similar significance. Wishing to showhow the passions ensnare us, he coined this composite name from the boldest of all creatures, the lion, and the mosttrivial, the ant. For the provocations or the passions begin with trivial fantasies, creeping up unnoticed like an ant;but eventually the passions grow to an enormous size and their attack is as dangerous as a lion's. One who ispursuing the spiritual way should therefore fight the passions when they approach like ants, hoping to deceive himby their trivial appearance. For if they are allowed to gain a lion's strength, it is hard to resist them and to refusethem the food they demand.

Now the food of the passions, as we have already stated many

times, consists of sense-impressions. They nourish the passions by attacking the soul with a succession of mentalfantasies or idols. This is why Moses put screens of latticework round the altar in the tabernacle (cf. Exod. 27:4),signifying that if we wish to keep our mind pure like a tabernacle we should do the same. Just as the lattices roundthe altar prevented anything unclean from entering, so we should weave a mental barrier against the senses byreflecting on the terrors of the coming judgment, and so bar the entry to unclean impressions. Ahaziah became illbecause he fell from a lattice-window (cf. 2 Kgs. 1:2); and to fall from a lattice-window means to succumb tosensual pleasure because, when tempted, we did not reflect seriously about the future retribution. And what can beworse than this kind of illness? For the body falls ill when the balance of its constituent elements is impaired,because one of them has come to predominate in a manner contrary to nature. But the soul falls ill when its rightjudgment is impaired and it is overcome by the passions which cause disease.

Solomon wove such lattices for the eyes of all those capable of understanding his meaning when he said: 'Whenyour eyes see a strange woman, your mouth will speak crooked things' (Prov. 23:33. LXX). By 'crooked things' hemeans the answer which, after sinning, we shall give at the time of retribution: but when we

judge things in the rightway, this prevents any dangerous gazing with our eyes and saves us from the confusion we should otherwise be in atthat time. Solomon continues: 'Be like someone who lies down in the midst of the sea, and like a pilot in a greatstorm' (Prov. 23:34. LXX). Now if someone at the actual moment of temptation resists the sight which is temptinghim, he is struggling to escape future punishment like a man battling in a storm at sea. Then he easily overcomes hisassailants, not noticing the wounds they inflict, and he is able to say: 'They strack me, but I felt no pain; theymocked me, but I paid no attention' (Prov. 23:35. LXX). 'They struck me,' he is saymg, 'and thought they had madea fool of me; yet I did not notice the wounds - for they were like children's arrows - and I paid no attention to theirtricks, but behaved as if they were not there.' David also despised such adversaries, for he said: 'When the evil oneturned away from me, I did not notice' (Ps. 101:4. LXX). By this he means: 'I perceived them neither when theyapproached nor when they withdrew.'

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Many of us, however, do not even realize that through the senses we enter into close association with sensoryobjects, and that such association leads easily to deception. We do not suspect the harm that results from this, but areunguardedly carried away by these sense-impressions. How, then, at the moment when we are being deceived willwe recognize the trap that has been laid for us, since we have not been trained to discern such things? The warfought by the Assyrians against the men of Sodom (cf Gen. 14:1-2) shows how the senses fight against sensoryobjects, and how the latter exact tribute from the senses when these are defeated. The Scriptural narrative records theagreement, truce and peace-offerings made at the Dead Sea by the four kings of the Assyrians and the five kings ofthe regions round Sodom; then the bondage of the five kings for twelve years; then their revolt in the thirteenth year,and the war that ensued in the fourteenth year when the four kings attacked the five and took them captive.

Such was the external course of events. Now this story teaches us something about ourselves and about thewarfare of our senses against sensory objects. The five kings represent the five senses and the four kings the objects

of sense-perception. All of us, from birth up to the age of twelve, uncritically allow our senses to be controlled bythe objects of sense-perception, because our

power of discrimination has not yet been purified. We let our sensesobey sensory objects as if they were the masters; our sense of sight is controlled by things visible, our hearing bysounds, our taste by flavors, our sense of smell by odors, and our sense of touch by physical objects. Because we arechildren, we cannot discriminate between the various things we perceive or offer any opposition to them. But whenour judgment starts to mature and. we become aware of the harm we are suffering, we at once begin to think ofrebelling against this slavery and escaping from it. And if we continue firm in this resolve, we can escape from thesecruel masters and remain for ever free. But if we waver in our decision, we betray our senses into captivity oncemore: they are overcome by the power of sensory objects, and from then on they endure a tyrannical servitudewithout any hope of escape. This is why the five kings in the story, after being defeated by the four, were driven towells of pitch (cf. Gen. 14:10. LXX); in other words those who are overcome by sensory things turn with each oftheir senses to the objects

proper to that sense, as if to pits and wells. Henceforth they think about nothing except visible objects, because theyhave fixed their desire upon what is earthly and are more attached to the things of this world than to those of theintellect.

Similarly, when a slave has come to love his master and his own wife and children, he may reject true freedombecause of his bonds of physical kinship: and so he becomes a slave for ever, allowing his ear to be pierced throughwith an awl (cf Exod. 21:6). He will never hear the word that can set him free, but will remain perpetually a slave inhis love for present things. This is why the Law commanded that a woman's hand should be cut off if she seizedhold of the genitals of a man who was fighting with another (cf. Deut. 25:11); in other words, when there was abattle between her thoughts, whether to choose worldly or heavenly blessings, she failed to choose the heavenly andgrasped those which are subject to generation and corruption - for by the genitals the Law signifies the things whichbelong to the realm of change.

We gain nothing, therefore, by our decision to renounce earthly things if we do not abide by it, but continue to beattracted by such things and allow ourselves to keep thinking about them. By constantly looking back like Lot's wifetowards

what we have renounced, we make clear our attachment, to it. For she looked back and was turned into apillar of salt, remaining to this day an example to the disobedient (cf. Gen. 19:26). She symbolizes the force of habit,which draws us back again after we have tried to make a definitive act of renunciation.

What does the Law mean when it commands anyone entering the temple not to return, after finishing his prayers,by the door through which he entered, but to go straight out through the opposite door without changing direction? Itmeans that we should keep to the path that leads straight to holiness, not allowing any doubts to make us turn back.By habitually thinking about what we have left behind, we undermine our determination to advance and we arepulled in the opposite direction, returning to our old sins. It is a terrible thing when the force of habit holds us fast,not allowing us to rise to the state of virtue which we possessed initially. For habit leads to a set disposition, and thisin turn becomes what may be called 'second nature'; and it is hard to shift and alter nature. For though it may yield alittle to pressure, it quickly reasserts

itself. It may be shaken and forced to give way, but it is not permanently changed, unless through prolonged effortwe retrace our steps, abandoning our bad habits and returning to the state of virtue we possessed when we first madeour renunciation.

The soul that succumbs to past habits and gives all its attention to material things, which lack true reality, is likeRachel sitting on Laban's idols: it does not listen to the teaching which would raise it up to higher things, but sayslike Rachel: 'I cannot rise up before you, for the custom of women is upon me' (Gen. 31: 35). For the soul which haslong been brooding on the things of this life is indeed 'sitting on idols'. Insubstantial in themselves, these idols aregiven substance by human artifice. Wealth, fame and the other things of this life all lack substance, for there isnothing clear and distinct about them. They possess a specious resemblance to reality, but change from day to day.We ourselves give them substance when in our thoughts we shape fantasies about things that serve no real purpose.With our fertile imagination we exceed the basic needs of the body to the point of impossible luxury: we lavishinnumerable sauces on our food: to show off, we dress up in expensive and luxurious clothes: and when

criticizedfor this useless extravagance we answer that we are merely doing what is fitting and proper. What else are we tryingto do in all this but to give substance to what in itself lacks reality?

We rightly spoke of such a soul as 'sitting on idols'. For when the soul becomes firmly attached to these unrealobjects, it is enslaved to habit instead of serving truth, and through habit it is defiling the real nature of things, asthough with menstrual blood. Scripture uses the expression 'sitting' to signiiy both failure to do what is right and alsolove of pleasure. It has in mind failure to do what is right when it speaks of 'those that sit in darkness and the shadowof death, fettered by poverty and iron' (Isa. 9:2: Ps. 107:10. LXX), for darkness and fetters prevent us from takingaction. And it has in mind love of pleasure when it speaks of those who in their hearts turned back toward Egypt andsaid one to another: 'We remembered how we sat by the flesh-pots and ate our fill of meat' (cf Exod. 16:3). Thosewho love pleasure, keeping their appetites hot and humid, are indeed sitting by the flesh-pots: for gluttony engenderslove of pleasure and many other passions as well. It is the root from which the rest of the passions spring up invigorous growth, little

by little developing as suckers alongside the mother tree, and putting out branches of evil that reach up to the sky.

Avarice, anger and dejection are all offshoots of gluttony. For the glutton needs money first of all, so as to satisfyhis ever-present desire — even though it never can be satisfied. His anger is inevitably aroused against those whoobstruct his acquisition of money, and in turn gives place to dejection when he proves too weak to get his way. He islike the snake which goes 'on its breast and belly' (Gen. 3:14. LXX). For when he possesses the material means for

pleasure, he goes on his beUy; but when he lacks these he goes on his breast, since this is where the incensive powerhas its seat. For those who love pleasure, when deprived of it, grow angry and embittered. Moses therefore made thepriest wear a breastplate, intimating through this symbol that he should inwardly restrain every impulse to anger bymeans of the intelligence: for it is termed 'the breastplate of judgment' (Exod. 28:15). Now the priest must controlthis passion

by means of the intelligence, for he is imperfect. Moses, however, being perfect, totally removed fromhimself the impulse to anger: figuratively speaking, he does not wear a breastplate but removes, as it were, his ownbreast. Thus Scripture says: 'Moses removed the breast, and brought it as an offering before the Lord' (Lev. 8:29.LXX). There are others who neither eliminate anger completely nor control it with the intelligence, but whoovercome it by laborious efforts. They are said to remove the breast 'with their arm', the arm being a symbol of toiland work. Similarly, to go 'on the belly' is a very apt symbol for the life of pleasure, since the belly is the cause ofvirtually all the pleasures: when the belly has been filled, our desires for other pleasures are intensified, but when itis not full they subside.

Here is another illustration of the difference between one who is perfect and one who is still making progress.Moses, completely rejecting the pleasures of food, 'washed the belly and the feet with water' (Lev. 8:21). Here 'belly'signifies pleasure, and 'feet' a man's ascent and progress. He who is still progressing, on the other hand, washes whatis inside the belly, but not the belly as a whole. Note that in this passage it says 'he washed', not 'they shall wash'.The first represents something voluntary, while the second indicates an action performed in obedience to acommand. He who is perfect does what is right, not because of any command, but by his own free

choice: whereas he who is still progressing acts in obedience to his superior. With very great care he removes, as itwere, the breast in its entirety, but he does not remove the belly - he only washes it. The wise man is able altogetherto renounce and eradicate wrath, but he is unable to eliminate the belly, since nature compels even the most asceticto eat a bare minimum of food.

When, however, the soul does not submit to the true and stable guidance of the intelligence, but has beencorrupted by impure pleasures, the belly becomes distended: for even when the body is sated, desire is unsatisfied.And if the belly is swollen, the thigh will rot (cf Num. 5:22): for when the belly is inflamed by luxurious foods, themind loses all power to conceive what is good and is paralyzed in its spiritual efforts. It is to these spiritual effortsthat the Law is referring when it talks about the thigh.

The lover of pleasure, then, goes on his belly, wallowing in sensual indulgence. But one who is beginning topursue the spiritual way gets rid of the fat round his belly by giving up rich food. One who has progressed furthercleanses what is inside his belly, while he who is perfect washes the whole of the belly, entirely rejecting what issuperfluous to his basic needs. Very appropriately. Scripture applies the word 'goes' (Gen. 3:14) to the man who hassunk down upon his chest and belly, for sensual pleasure is characteristic of those who are restless and fall ofagitation, not of those who are still and calm.

Sexual desire is even more closely related to gluttony than are the passions of anger and dejection mentioned

above. Nature herself has indicated the intimate connection between the two by placing the organs of sexualintercourse immediately below the belly. If lust is weak, it is because the belly has been made to go in want; while iflust is easily excited, it is from the belly that it derives its strength.

As well as nursing and feeding these passions, gluttony also destroys everything good. Once it gains the upperhand, it drives out self-control, moderation, courage, fortitude and all the other virtues. This is what Jeremiahcryptically indicates when he says: 'And the chief cook of the Babylonians pulled down the wall of Jerusalem roundabout' (cf. 2 Kgs. 25:9-10; Jer. 52:14. LXX). Here the 'chief cook' signifies the passion of gluttony; for a chef

makes every effort to minister to the belly, devising innumerable ways of giving it pleasure, and gluttony does justthe same. A great variety of different foods overthrows the fortress of the virtues and razes it to the ground. Saucesand condiments are the siege-engines that batter against virtue and overthrow it, even when it is already firmlyestablished. And while over-indulgence destroys the virtues, frugality destroys the stronghold of vice. Just as thechief cook of the Babylonians pulled down the walls of Jerusalem (and Jerusalem means a soul that is at peace) byencouraging fleshly pleasures through the art of cooking, so in the dream the Israelite's cake of barley bread, rollingdown the hill, knocked down the Midiamte tent (cf Judg. 7:13); for a frugal diet, steadily maintained -

gatheringimpetus, as it were, from year to year - destroys the impulse to unchastit}'. The Midiamtes symbolize the passions ofunchastity, because it was they who introduced this vice into Israel and deceived a great number of the young people(cf. Num. 31:9). Scripture aptly says that the Midianites had tents while Jerusalem had a wall; for all the things thatcontain virtue are well-founded and firm, whereas those that contain vice are an external appearance - a tent - andare no different from fantasy.

In order to escape such vice, the saints fled from the towns and avoided meeting a large number of people, forthey knew that the company of corrupt men is more destructive than a plague. This is why, indifferent to gain, theylet their estates become sheep-pastures, so as to avoid distractions. This is why Elijah left Judea and went to live onMount Carmel (cf. 1 Kgs. 18:19), which was desolate and full of wild animals; and apart from what grew on treesand shrubs there was nothing to eat, so he kept himself alive on nuts and berries. Elisha followed the same mode oflife, inheriting from his teacher, besides many other good things, a love of the wilderness (cf. 2 Kgs. 2:25). John,too, dwelt in the wilderness of Jordan, 'eating locusts and wild honey' (Mark 1:6); thus he showed us that our bodilyneeds can be satisfied without much trouble, and he reproached us for our elaborate pleasures. Possibly Moses wasinstituting a general law in this matter when he commanded the Israelites to gather daily no more than one day'ssupply of manna (cf. Exod. 16:16-17), thereby ordaining in a concealed fashion that men should live from day today and not make preparations for the morrow. He thought it right that creatures made in the divine image

should be content with whatever comes to hand and should trust God to supply the rest; otherwise, by making

provision for the future, they seem to lack faith in God's gifts of grace and to be afraid that He wiU cease to bestowHis continual blessings upon mankind.

In short, this is why all the saints, 'of whom the world was not worthy', left the inhabited regions and "wandered indeserts and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth', going about 'in sheepskins, in goatskins, beingdestitute, afflicted, tormented' (Heb. 11:37-38). They fled from the sophisticated

wickedness of men and from all theunnatural things of which the towns are full, not wishing to be swept off their feet and carried along with all theothers into the whirlpool of confusion. They were glad, to live with the wild beasts, judging them less harmful thantheir fellow men. They avoided men as being treacherous, while they trusted the animals as their friends; for animalsdo not teach us to sin, but revere and respect holiness. Thus men tried to kill Daniel but the lions saved him,preserving him when he had been unjustly condemned out of malice (cf Dan. 6:16-23); and when human justice hadmiscarried, the animals proclaimed his innocence. Whereas Daniel's holiness gave rise to strife and envy amongmen, among the wild animals it evoked awe and veneration.

All of us, then, who long to make spiritual progress should strive to imitate the holiness of the saints. Let us ridourselves of enslavement to the body's demands and pursue freedom. The wild ass was made by the Creator to runfree in the wilderness: he does not hear the chiding of the driver and laughs to scorn the crowds in the town (cf. Job39:5-7). But until this moment we have made him carry burdens, placing him under the yoke of passion and sin. Letus now loose him from his bonds, despite the objections of those who through long habit have acquired control overhim, even though they are not his masters by nature. Certainly when they hear us say, not with our tongue alone butin all sincerity, 'The Lord has need of him' (Mark 11:3), they will at once release him. Then, covered with theapostles' garments, he will become the bearer of the divine Logos. Set loose in his original place of grazing, he willbe able to 'search after every green thing' (Job 39:8) - which means he will seek the riches of Holy Scripture and sobe led to the life of perfection, gaining nourishment and joy. But why, we ask, does the

wild ass, created by God to live in the salt land of the desert, 'search after every green thing', since generally suchland is not suitable for the growth of plants? The answer must be that, where the moisture of the passions has driedup and there is a desert, it is possible to seek the inner truth contained in Scripture.

Let us leave behind worldly things and raise ourselves towards the soul's true good. How long shall we continuewith trivial playthings? Will we never assume a manly spirit? We are more feeble than tiny children, and unlikethem we make

no progress towards greater things. When they grow up, they abandon their games, readilyrelinquishing their attachment to the things they played with - nuts, knucklebones, balls and so on. They are attachedto these and prize them so long as their understanding is immature; but when they grow up and become men, theydrop such things and devote their full attention to the affairs of adult life. We, however, have remained children,enchanted by what really deserves mockery and derision. Abandoning all effort to attain higher things and todevelop an adult intelligence, we are seduced by worldly amusements, making ourselves a laughing-stock to thosewho judge things at their true value. It is disgraceful for a grown man to be seen sitting and drawing pictures in thedust to amuse children; and it is equally disgraceful - indeed much more so - for those whose professed aim is theenjoyment of eternal blessings to be seen groveling in the dust of worldly things, shaming their vocation by

incongruous behavior.

Probably the reason why we act hke this is because we never think about anything superior to the visible objectsaround us. We do not appreciate how much better the blessings of the spiritual world are than the tawdry attractionsof this present world, which dazzle us with their specious glory and draw all our desire to them, m the absence ofwhat is better, what is worse will take its place and be held in honor. If only we had a deeper understanding of therealities of the divine world, we would not be taken in by the attractions of this world.

Let us begin, then, to withdraw from the things of this world. Let us despise possessions and money and all thatswamps and drowns our intelligence. Let us cast overboard our cargo, so that our ship may float more buoyantly.Hard-pressed by the storm, let us jettison the greater part of our equipment; then our helmsman - the mtellect,together with its thoughts - will be saved. Those who

travel by sea, when overtaken by a storm, do not worry about their merchandise but throw it into the waters withtheir own hands, considering their property less important than their life. Why, then, do we not follow their example,and for the sake of the higher life despise whatever drags our soul down to the depths? Why is fear of God lesspowerful than fear of the sea? In their desire not to be deprived

of this transitory life, they judge the loss of theirgoods no great disaster; but we, who claim to be seeking eternal life, do not look with detachment on even the mostinsignificant object, but prefer to perish with the cargo rather than be saved without it.

Let us strip ourselves of everything, since our adversary stands before us stripped. Do athletes compete with theirclothes on? No, the rules require them to enter the stadium naked. Whether it is warm or cold, that is how they enter,leaving their clothes outside; and if anyone refuses to strip, he excludes himself from the contest. Now we too claimto be athletes, and we are struggling against opponents far more skilful than any that are visible. Yet, instead ofstripping ourselves, we try to engage in the contest while carrying countless burdens on our shoulders, thus givingour opponents many chances of getting a grip on us. How can someone encumbered with material possessionscontend against 'spiritual wickedness" (Eph. 6:12), since he is vulnerable from every angle? How can someoneweighed down with wealth wrestle with the demon of avarice? How can someone clothed in worldly preoccupationsrace against demons stripped of every care? Holy Scripture says, 'The naked shall run swiftly in that day' (Amos2:16. LXX) - the naked, not the one who is hindered in ranning by thoughts about money and material possessions.

A naked person is hard or even impossible to catch. If Joseph had been naked, the Egyptian woman would nothave found anything to seize hold of, for the Scriptures say that 'she caught him by his garment, saying: "Lie withme" ' (Gen. 39:12). Now 'garments' are the physical things whereby sensual pleasure seizes hold of us and drags usabout; for whoever is encumbered with such things will of necessity be dragged about by them against his will.When Joseph saw that, because of his body's need for clothes, he was being dragged into intimacy and union withsensual pleasure, he abandoned them and fled; he realized that, unless he was naked, the mistress of the house wouldseize him and hold him back by force. So when he left

he was naked except for his virtue, hke Adam in Paradise: for God allowed Adam to go about naked as a specialprivilege, but after the fall he needed to wear clothes. So long as Adam resisted the enemies who urged him to

breakGod's commandment, he stood naked like an athlete in the arena: but once he had been defeated in the contest, itwas appropriate for him to put on clothes. This is why the writer of Proverbs says to the intelligence, our trainer:'Take away his garment, for he has entered' (Prov. 27:13. LXX). So long as someone does not compete but staysoutside the arena, he will of course remain clothed, smothering beneath the garments of sensory things the manlystrength required for the contest: but once he enters the contest, his garment is taken away, for he must competenaked.

Indeed, we must be not only naked but anointed with oil. Stripping prevents our opponent from getting a grasp onus, while oil enables us to slip away should he in fact seize hold of us. That is why a wrestler tries to cover hisopponent's body with dust: this will counteract the slipperiness of the oil and make it easier for him to get a hold.Now what dust is in their case, worldly things are in the case of our own struggle: and what oil is in their case,detachment is in ours. In physical wrestling, someone anointed with oil easily breaks free from his opponent's grip,but if he is covered with dust he finds it hard to escape. Similarly, in our case it is difficult for the devil to seize holdof one who has no worldly attachments. But when a man is full of anxiety about material things the intellect, asthough covered with dust, loses the agility which detachment confers upon it: and then it is hard for him to escapefrom the devil's grip.

Detachment is the mark of a perfect soul, whereas it is characteristic of an imperfect soul to be worn down withanxiety about material things. The perfect soul is called a 'lily among thorns' (S. of S. 2:2), meaning that it lives withdetachment in the midst of those who are troubled by such anxiety. For in the Gospel the lily signifies the soul that isdetached from worldly care: 'They do not toil or spin ... yet even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one ofthem' (Matt. 6:28-29). But of those who devote much anxious thought to bodily things, it is said: 'All the life of theungodly is spent in anxiety' (Job 15:20. LXX). It is indeed ungodly to pass one's whole life worrying about bodilythings and to give

no thought to the blessings of the age to come - to spend all 'one's time on the body, though it does not need muchattention, and not to devote even a passing

moment to the soul, though the journey before it is so great that a wholelifetime is too short to bring it to perfection. Even if we do seem to allot a certain amount of time to it, we do thiscarelessly and lazily, for we are always being attracted by visible things.

We are like people enticed by ugly prostitutes who lack true beauty but conceal their ugliness with the help ofcosmetics, producing a counterfeit beauty that ensnares those who see it. Having once been overcome by the vain

things of this present life, we are unable to see the ugliness of matter, for we are fooled by our attachment to it. Forthis reason, we do not remain content with basic necessities, but become dependent on all sorts of possessions,ruining our lives by our greed. We do not see that our possessions should be limited according to our bodily needs,and that what exceeds these is in bad taste and unnecessary. A cloak measured to fit the body is both necessary andin good taste; while one which is too long, getting entangled in our feet and dragging on the ground, not only looksunsightly, but also proves a hindrance in every kind of work. Similarly, possessions superfluous to our bodily needsare an obstacle to virtue, and are strongly condemned by those capable of understanding the true nature of things.

We should therefore pay no attention to such as are deceived by sensory things, and should not uncritically followthose who remain attached to what is worldly because they have never given thought to spiritual realities. To relyupon such men, and to consider that they have made a wise choice in pursuing transitory pleasures, is to put our trustin those who lack any criterion for making a sound judgment: it is like using the blind as judges of color or the deafas music critics. For those whose intelligence is crippled are truly blind, since they lack the basic criterion wherebyto distinguish between the important and the trivial. One such man was Achan, the son of Canni, who confessed toJoshua that the stolen things were hidden in his tent, buried in the ground, with the silver underneath them (cf. Josh.7:21). For he who assigns a higher position to the varied attractions of material things and buries his intelligencebeneath them, is led astray like a fool, yielding to whatever takes his fancy, because he has. deposed his intelligencefrom its royal

throne and assigned it a place among those it should be ruling - or, rather, among condemned criminals. But if hisintelligence were established in its proper position and entrusted with the judging of sensory matters, it woulddeliver a just and sound verdict, punishing the impulse that chases after deceptive things.

We should remain, then, within the limits imposed by our basic needs and strive with all our power not to exceedthem. For once we are carried a little beyond these limits in our desire for the pleasures of this life, there is then nocriterion by which to check our onward movement, since no bounds can be set to that which exceeds the necessary.Pointless effort and endless labor wasted on what is unnecessary only serve to increase our longing for it, addingmore fuel to the flames. Once a man has passed beyond the limits of his natural needs, as he grows morematerialistic he wants to put jam on his bread; and to water he adds first the modicum of wine required for hishealth, and then the most expensive vintages. He does not rest content with essential clothing, but starts to purchaseclothes made from brightly-colored wool of the very best quality; next he demands clothes made from a mixture oflinen and wool: next he searches for silken clothes - at first just for plain silk, and then for silk embroidered withscenes of battles and hunting and the like. He acquires vessels of silver and gold, not just for banqueting but foranimals to feed from and for use as chamber-pots. What need is there to say more about such absurd ostentation,extending as it does to the basest needs, so that even chamber-pots must be made of nothing less than silver? Such isthe nature of sensual pleasure: it embraces even the lowliest things and leads us to invest the meanest of functionswith material luxury.

All this is contrary to nature, for the Creator has ordained the same natural way of life for both us and the animals.

'Behold,' says God to man, 'I have given you every herb of the field, to serve as food for you and for the beasts' (cf.Gen, 1:29-30). Thus we have been given a common diet with the animals: but if we use our powers of invention toturn this into something extravagant, shall we not rightly be judged more unintelligent than they? The animalsremain within the boundaries of nature, not altering in any way what God has ordained: but we, who have beenhonored with the power of intelligence, have completely abandoned His original ordinance. Do animals demand aluxury diet? What chefs and pastry-

cooks pander to their bellies? Do they not prefer the original simplicity, eating the herbs of the field, content withwhatever is at hand, drinking water from springs - and this only mfrequently? In this way they diminish sexual lustand do not inflame their desires with fatty foods. They become conscious of the difference between male and femaleonly during the one season of the year ordained by the law of nature for them to mate in, so as to propagate and continue their species. The rest of the year they keep away from one another as if they had altogether forgotten any suchappetite. In men, on the other hand, as a result of the richness of their food, an insatiable desire for sexual pleasurehas grown up, producing in them frenzied appetites which never allow this passion to be still.

Since, then, possessions are the cause of great harm and, like a source of disease, they give rise to all the passions,we must eliminate this cause if we are really concerned for the well-being of "our souls. Let us cure the passion ofavarice through voluntary poverty. By embracing solitude let us avoid meeting those who do us no good, for thecompany of frivolous people is harmful and undermines our state of peace. Just as those who live in an unhealthyclimate are generally ill, so those who spend their time with worthless men share in their vices.

What do those who have renounced the world still have in common with the world? 'In order to please the leaderwho has chosen him, the soldier going to war does not entangle himself in the affairs of this world' (2 Tim. 2:4).Preoccupation with business hinders military training: and if we are untrained, how can we stand our ground whenfighting against experienced troops? Rather, to tell the truth, we fight so half-heartedly that we do not withstand theenemy even when he is lying on the ground. We who stand upright are the prey of him who is fallen. We suffer thesame miserable fate as those who, out of avarice, despoil corpses in wartime. After the battle has been won, theycome up to someone who lies half-dead and start searching his body: and then, taken unawares, they receive amortal blow from him, foolishly bringing disgrace upon themselves after their glorious victory. In the same way,when we have overthrown the enemy through our self-control and restraint - or rather, when we think we haveoverthrown him -we become attracted by his clothes, that is, by the different things men prize: wealth, power, goodliving, fame. We approach our

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fallen enemy in our longing to take his things: and so we are killed, having led ourselves to the slaughter. That washow the five virgins came to grief (cf. Matt. 25:1-13): through their purity they had destroyed the enemy, but

because of their hardness of heart, which is engendered by avarice, they drove the enemy's sword through their ownbodies, when he himseh" lay helpless.

Let us not seek anything that belongs to the enemy, lest in so doing we lose our own life. For even now he isurging us to take what is his, especially when he finds us ready to comply. He even urged the Lord himself in thisway, saying: 'AH these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me' (Matt. 4:9). So with thespecious allurements of this life he tried to deceive the Son of God, who has no need of any such things. How, then,could he fail to think of deceiving men who are easily led astray and attracted to the enjoyment of sensory things?

Once we have learnt to train our body, let us also train our intellect in true devotion. For 'bodily asceticism hasonly a limited use', in this respect resembling elementary education; whereas 'true devotion is useful in all things' (1Tim. 4:8), and brings well-being to the souls of those who seek to defeat their enemies, the passions. Children whoare training for sports need to exercise their bodies, to move their limbs constantly, to make every effort to gain anathlete's strength, and to anoint themselves with oil in preparation for the sacred games. Likewise those who arebeginning the life of holiness should try to hinder the activity of the passions. At this stage they are still drivenfrantic by the pleasures that accompany the passions, and habit forces them into sin, almost without any act ofchoice on their part: they have therefore done well if they can control the passions. But those in whom the practiceof the virtues has become established can also direct their attention to the mind. They should make every effort tokeep watch over their intelligence so that it does not get out of control and go astray. In short, beginners try to traintheir body, while the more advanced attempt to restrain the impulses of their intelligence, so that its workings mayaccord solely with the teachings of wisdom, and no worldly fantasy may distract it from thoughts about God.

One who is pursuing the spiritual way should direct all his desire towards the Lord whom he loves: then humanthoughts will find no opportunity whatever to activate within him the corresponding

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passions. Each passion, when active within someone whom it controls, holds his intelligence in chains: why, then,cannot zeal for holiness keep our mind free from everything else'? When an angry man fights in his imaginationagainst the person who has offended him, is he conscious of anything external? Is not the same true of the man whodesires material possessions, when he imagines ways of getting what he wants? And the lustful man, even when inthe company of others, often becomes oblivious of his surroundings and sits like a block of stone, saying nothing,thinking only of the women he desires: turning in upon himself, he is completely absorbed by his own fantasies.Perhaps it is a soul such as this that the Law describes as 'sitting apart" (Lev. 15:33. LXX): sitting far from thesenses, it concentrates all its activities within itself, totally unconscious of external things because of the shamefulfantasy that dominates it.

Now if our attachment to such things gives them this power over our intelligence and stops the senses fromfunctioning, how much more should the love of wisdom cause our intellect to renounce both sensory things and thesenses themselves, lifting it up and concentrating it upon the contemplation of spiritual things? Just as someone whois cut or burnt can think of nothing else because of the intense pain, so a man who is thinking passionately about

some object has no thoughts for anything else: the passion that dominates him affects his whole intelligence. Intensepain makes hard work impossible: sorrow excludes joy, and dejection mirth: hard work in its turn excludes sensualpleasure. Thus opposing passions are mutually exclusive and will never unite: co-operation between them isimpossible, because of the implacable enmity and opposition that separates them by nature.

Do not, therefore, let the purity of your virtue be clouded by thoughts of worldly things: do not let the intensity ofyour contemplation be disturbed by bodily cares. Then true wisdom will stand revealed in its full beauty and it willno longer be maligned by insolent men because of our shortcomings, or mocked by

those who know nothing aboutit: but it will be praised, if not by men, at any rate by the angelic powers and by Christ our Lord. It was His praisethat was desired by the saints, such as David, who despised human glory but sought honor from God, saying: 'Mypraise shall be from Thee', and 'My soul shall be praised by the Lord" (Ps. 22:25:

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34:2. LXX). From malice men often speak slanderously of what is good: but the tribunal on high gives judgmentwith impartiality, and delivers its verdict in accordance with the truth.

Let us, then, bring joy to this heavenly tribunal, which rejoices in our acts of righteousness. We need not worryabout men's opinions, for men can neither reward those who have lived well nor punish those who have livedotherwise. If because of envy or worldly attachment they seek to discredit the way of holiness, they are defamingwith deluded blasphemies the life honored by God and the angels. At the time of judgment those who have livedrightly will be rewarded with eternal blessings, not on the basis of human opinion, but in accordance with the truenature of their life. May all of us attain these blessings through the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whombe glory together with the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and through all the ages. Amen.

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St Diadochos of Photiki

(c. 400 - c. 486)(Volume Ipp. 251-296)

Introductory Note

St Diadochos, who was born around 400 and died before 486, was bishop of Photiki in Epirus (North Greece): he wroteagainst the Monophysites and supported the Council of Chalcedon (451). In the work On Spiritual Knowledge andDiscrimination he reveals, as St Nikodimos puts it, 'the deepest secrets of the virtue of prayer'. Written in a sensitive style ofgreat beauty, the work is of basic importance for an understanding of Orthodox mystical theology. Diadochos' thought is ofexceptional subtlety and precision, and his exact meaning is not

easy to grasp.

St Diadochos borrows many of the Evagrian technical terms, but his work contains certain features not found in Evagrios: anemphasis, for instance, upon the primacy of love (see especially §§ 90-92), upon the sacraments, and upon the heart as well as

the intellect (nous). His teaching on baptism (§§ 76-78) is closely parallel to that of St Mark the Ascetic; here, and in many otherpassages of the work, St Diadochos has particularly in view the errors of the Messalians. St Diadochos emphasizes thefundamental unity of man's body and soul: our present state of dividedness is the consequence of the fall (§§ 24-25). He attachesgreat importance to the continual remembrance and invocation of the Lord Jesus (§§ 31, 32, 33, 59, 61, 85, 88, 97).

In our translation we have used the critical Greek text of E. des Places, Diadoque de Photice: Oeuvres spirituelles (Sourceschretiennes 5: 2nd edition, reprinted with additions, Paris, 1966).

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Faith: dispassionate understanding of God.

Hope: the Flight of the intellect in love towards that for which ithopes.

Patience: with the eyes of the mind always to see the Invisible asvisible.

Freedom from avarice: to desire not to have possessions with the same fervor as men generally desire to havepossessions.

Knowledge: to lose awareness of oneself through going out to God in ecstasy.

Humility: attentive forgetfulness of what one has accomplished.

Freedom from anger: a real longing not to lose one's temper.

Purity: unwavering perception of God.

Love: growing affection for those who abuse us.

Total transformation: through delight in God, to look on the repulsiveness of death as a joy.

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1. All spiritual contemplation should be governed by faith, hope and love, but most of all by love. The first twoteach us to be detached from visible delights, but love unites the soul with the excellence of God, searching out theInvisible by means of intellectual perception.

2. Only God is good by nature, but with God's help man can become good through careful attention to his way oflife. He transforms himself into what he is not when his soul, by devotmg its attention to true delight, unites itself toGod, in so far as its energized power desires this. For it is written: 'Be good and merciful as is your Father in heaven'(cf Luke 6:36; Matt. 5:48).

3. Evil does not exist by nature, nor is any man naturally evil, for God made nothing that was not good. When inthe desire of his heart someone conceives and gives form to what in reality has no existence, then what he desiresbegins to exist. We should therefore turn our attention away from the inclination to evil and concentrate it on theremembrance of God; for good, which exists by nature, is more powerful than our inclination to evil. The one hasexistence while the other has not, except when we give it existence through our actions.

4. All men are made in God's image; but to be in His likeness is granted only to those who through great lovehave brought their own freedom into subjection to God. For only when we do not belong to ourselves do we becomelike Him who through love has reconciled us to Himself. No one achieves this unless he

persuades his soul not to bedistracted by the false glitter of this life.

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5. Free will is the power of a deiform soul to direct itself by deliberate choice towards whatever it decides. Let usmake sure that our soul directs itself deliberately only towards what is good, so that we always consume ourremembrance of evil with good thoughts.

6. The light of true knowledge is the power to discriminate without error between good and evil. Then the path ofrighteousness leads the intellect upward towards the Sun of Righteousness and brings it into the boundlessillumination of spiritual knowledge, so that henceforward it will grow more and more confident in its quest for love.With an mcensive power free from anger we should snatch righteousness from the hands of those who dare tooutrage it, since the aspiration for holiness triumphs not by hating others, but by convincing them of their faults.

7. Spiritual discourse fully satisfies our intellectual perception, because it comes from God through the energy oflove. It is on account of this that the intellect continues undisturbed in its concentration on theology. It does notsuffer then from the emptiness which produces a state of anxiety, since in its contemplation it is filled to the degreethat the energy of love desires. So it is right always to wait, with a faith energized by love, for the illuminationwhich will enable us to speak. For nothing is so destitute as a mind philosophizing about God when it is withoutHim.

8. The unilluminated should not embark on spiritual speculations nor, on the other hand, should anyone try tospeak while the light of the Holy Spirit is shining richly upon him. For where there is emptiness, ignorance is also tobe found, but where there is richness of the Spirit, no speech is possible. At such a time the soul is drunk with thelove of God and, with voice silent, delights in His glory. We should therefore watch for the middle point betweenthese two extremes before we begin to speak of God. This balance confers a certain

harmony on our wordsglorifying God; as we speak and teach, our faith is nourished by the richness of the illumination and so, because ofour love, we are the first to taste the fruits of knowledge. For it is written: 'The farmer who does the work should bethe first to eat of the produce' (2 Tim. 2; 6).

9. Wisdom and spiritual knowledge are both gifts of the one Holy Spirit, as are all the divine gifts of grace: buteach has its own distinctive energy. For this reason the Apostle testifies that to one is

given wisdom, to another spiritual knowledge by the same Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 12:8). Such knowledge unites man toGod through experience, but does not move him to express outwardly what he knows. Some, then, of those whopractice the solitary life are consciously illuminated by spiritual knowledge, yet do not speak about God. But whenwisdom, with the fear of God, is given to someone at the same time as spiritual knowledge - and this seldomhappens - it leads him to express outwardly the inner energies of this knowledge within him: for spiritual knowledgeilluminates men through its inner energy while wisdom does so through being expressed outwardly. Spiritualknowledge comes through prayer, deep stillness and complete detachment, while wisdom comes through humblemeditation on Holy Scripture and, above all, through grace given by God.

10. When the soul's incensive power is aroused against the passions, we should know that it is time for silence, asthe hour of battle is at hand. But when this turbulence grows calm, whether through prayer or through acts of mercy,we may then be moved by a desire to proclaim God's mysteries, restraining the wings of our intellect with the cordsof humility. For unless a man sets himself utterly at naught, he cannot speak of the majesty of God.

11. Spiritual discourse always keeps the soul free from self-esteem, for it gives every part of the soul a sense oflight, so that it no longer needs the praise of men. In the same way, such discourse keeps the mind free from fantasy,transfusing it completely with the love of God. Discourse deriving from the wisdom of this

world, on the other hand,always provokes self-esteem: because it is incapable of granting us the experience of spiritual perception, it inspiresits adepts with a longing for praise, being nothing but the fabrication of conceited men. It follows, therefore, that wecan know with certainty when we are in the proper state to speak about God, if during the hours when we do notspeak we maintain a fervent remembrance of God in untroubled silence.

12. Whoever loves himself cannot love God: but if, because of 'the overflowing richness' of God's love, a mandoes not love himself, then he truly loves God (Eph. 2:7). Such a man never seeks his own glory, but seeks the gloryof God. The man who loves himself seeks his own glory, whereas he who loves God loves the glory of his Creator.It is characteristic of the soul which consciously

senses the love of God always to seek God's glory in every commandment it performs, and to be happy in its lowestate. For glory befits God because of His majesty, while lowliness befits man because it unites us with God. If werealize this, rejoicing in the glory of the Lord, we too, like St John the Baptist, will begin to say unceasingly, 'Hemust increase, but we must decrease' (cf. John 3:30).

13.1 know a man who loves God with great intensity, and yet grieves because he does not love Him as much ashe would wish. His soul is ceaselessly filled with burning desire that God should be glorified in him and that hehimself should be as nothing. This man does not think of what he is, even when others praise him. In his great desirefor humility he does not think of his priestly rank, but performs his ministry as the rules enjoin. In his extreme love

for God, he strips himself of any thought of his own dignity: and with a spirit of humility he buries in the depths ofdivine love any pride to which his high position might give rise. Thus, out of desire to humble himself, he alwayssees himself in his own mind as a useless servant, extraneous to the rank he holds. We too should do the same,fleeing all honor and glory in the overflowing richness of

our love for the Lord who loves us so greatly.

14. He who loves God consciously in his heart is known by God (cf. 1 Cor. 8:3), for to the degree that he receivesthe love of God consciously in his soul, he truly enters into God's love. From that time on, such a man never loses anintense longing for the illumination of spiritual knowledge, until he senses its strength in his bones and no longerknows himself, but is completely transformed by the love of God. He is both present in this life and not present in it;still dwelling in the body, he yet departs from it, as through love he ceaselessly journeys towards God in his soul.His heart now bums constantly with the fire of love and clings to God with an irresistible longing, since he has onceand for all transcended self-love in his love for God. As St Paul writes: 'If we go out of ourselves, it is because ofGod: if we are restrained, it is for your sake' (2 Cor. 5:13.

15. When a man begins to perceive the love of God in all its richness, he begins also to love his neighbor withspiritual perception. This is the love of which all the scriptures speak. Friendship after the flesh is very easilydestroyed on some slight pretext, since it is not held firm by spiritual perception. But when a person is

spiritually awakened, even if something irritates him, the bond of love is not dissolved: rekindling himself with thewarmth of the love of God, he quickly recovers himself and with great joy seeks his neighbor's love, even though hehas been gravely wronged or insulted by him. For the sweetness of God completely consumes the bitterness of thequarrel.

16. No one can love God consciously in his heart unless he has first feared Him with all his heart. Through theaction of fear the soul is purified and, as it were, made malleable and so it becomes awakened to the action of love.No one, however, can come to fear God completely in the way described, unless he first transcends all worldlycares: for when the intellect reaches a state of deep stillness and detachment, then the fear of God begins to troubleit, purifying it

with full perception from all gross and cloddish density, and thereby bringing it to a great love forGod's goodness. Thus the fear which characterizes those who are still being purified is accompanied by a moderatemeasure of love. But perfect love is found in those who have already been purified and in whom there is no longerany fear, for 'perfect love casts out fear' (1 John 4:18). Fear and love are found together only in the righteous whoachieve virtue through the energy of the Holy Spirit in them. For this reason Holy Scripture says in one place: '0 fearthe Lord, all you who are His saints' (Ps. 34:9), and in another: '0 love the Lord, all you who are His saints' (Ps.31:23). From this we see clearly that the righteous, who are still in the process of being purified, are characterizedboth by fear and by a moderate measure of love: perfect love, on the other hand, is found only in those who havealready been purified and in whom there is no longer any thought of fear, but rather a constant burning and bindingof the soul to God through the energy of the Holy Spirit. As it is written, "My soul is bound to Thee: Thy right handhas upheld me' (Ps. 63:8. LXX).

17. If wounds in the body have been neglected and left unattended, they do not react to medicine when thedoctors apply it to them: but if they have first been cleansed, then they respond to the action of the medicine and soare quickly healed. In the same way, if the soul is neglected and wholly covered with the leprosy of self-indulgence,it cannot experience the fear of God, however persistently it is warned of the terror and power of God's judgment.When, however, through great attentiveness the soul begins to be

purified, it also begins to experience the fear of God as a life-giving medicine which, through the reproaches itarouses in the conscience, bums the soul in the fire of dispassion. After this the soul is gradually cleansed until it iscompletely purified: its love increases as its fear diminishes, until it attains perfect love, in which there is no fear butonly the complete dispassion which is energized by the glory of God. So let us rejoice endlessly in our fear of Godand in the love which is the fulfilling of the law of perfection in Christ (cf Rom. 13:10).

18. A person who is not detached from worldly cares can neither love God truly nor hate the devil as he should,for such cares are both a burden and a veil. His intellect cannot discern the tribunal which will judge him, neithercan it foresee the verdict which will be given at his trial. For all these reasons, then, withdrawal from the world isinvaluable.

19. The qualities of a pure soul are intelligence devoid of envy, ambition free from malice, and unceasing love forthe Lord of glory. When the soul has these qualities, then the intellect can accurately assess how it will be judged,seeing itself appear before the most faultless of tribunals.

20. Faith without works and works without faith will both alike be condemned, for he who has faith must offer tothe Lord the faith which shows itself in actions. Our father Abraham would not have been counted righteous becauseof his faith had he not offered its fruit, his son (cf. Jas. 2:21: Rom. 4:3).

21. He who loves God both believes truly and performs the works of faith reverently. But he who only believesand does not love, lacks even the faith he thinks he has: for he believes merely with a certain superficiality ofintellect and is not energized by the full force of love's glory. The chief part of virtue, then, is faith energized bylove.

22. The deep waters of faith seem turbulent when we peer into them too curiously: but when contemplated in aspirit of simplicity, they are calm. The depths of faith are like the waters of Lethe, making us forget all evil: theywill not reveal themselves to the scrutiny of meddlesome reasoning. Let us therefore sail these waters withsimplicity of mind, and so reach the harbor of God's will.

23. No one can either love truly or believe truly unless he has first brought accusation against himself. For solong as our conscience is troubled with self-reproach, the intellect is no longer able

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to sense the perfume of heavenly blessings, but at once becomes divided and ambivalent. Because of the experienceit once enjoyed it reaches out fervently towards faith, but can no longer perceive faith in the heart through lo\'ebecause of the pricks of an accusing conscience. But when we have purified ourselves by closer attentive-ness, thenwith a fuller experience of God we shall attain what we desire.

24. Just as the senses of the body impel us almost violently towards what attracts them, so the perceptive facultyof the intellect, once it tastes the divine goodness, leads us towards invisible blessings. Everything longs for what isakin to itself: the soul, since it is bodiless, desires heavenly goods, while the body, being dust, seeks earthlynourishment. So we shall surely come to experience immaterial perception if by our labors we refine our materialnature.

25. Divine knowledge, once it is awakened in us, teaches us that the perceptive faculty natural to our soul issingle, but that it is split into two distinct modes of operation as a result of Adam's disobedience. This single andsimple perceptive faculty is implanted in the soul by the Holy Spirit; but no one can realize this singleness ofperception except those who have willingly abandoned the delights of this corruptible life in the hope of enjoyingthose of eternity, and who have caused every appetite of the bodily senses to wither away through self-control. Onlyin such men does the intellect, because of its freedom from worldly care, act with its full vigor so that it is capable ofperceiving ineffably the goodness of God. Then, according to the measure of its own progress, the intellectcommunicates its joy to the body too, rejoicing endlessly in the song of love and praise: 'My heart has trusted inHim and I am helped; my flesh flowers again, and with all my being I will sing His praise" (Ps. 28:7. LXX). The joywhich then fills both soul and body is a true recalling of the life without corruption.

26. Those pursuing the spiritual way must always keep the mind free from agitation in order that the intellect, asit discriminates among the thoughts that pass through the mind, may store in the treasuries of its memory thosethoughts which are good and have been sent by God, while casting out those which are evil and come from the devil.When the sea is calm, fishermen can scan its depths and therefore hardly any creature moving in the water escapestheir

notice. But when the sea is disturbed by the winds, it hides beneath its turbid and agitated waves what it was happyto reveal when it was smiling and calm; and then the fishermen's skill and cunning prove vain. The same thinghappens with the contemplative power of the intellect, especially when it is unjust anger which disturbs the depths ofthe soul.

27. Very few men can accurately recognize all their own faults;

indeed, only those can do this whose intellect is never torn away from the remembrance of God. Our bodily eyes,when healthy, can see everything, even gnats and mosquitoes flying about in the air; but when they are clouded bysome discharge, they see large objects only indistinctly and small things not at all. Similarly if the soul, throughattentiveness, reduces the blindness caused by the love of this world, it will consider its slightest faults to be verygrave and will continually shed tears with deep thankfulness. For it is written, 'The righteous shall give thanks untoThy name' (Ps. 140:13). But if the soul persists in its worldly disposition, even though it commits a murder or someother act deserving severe punishment, it takes little notice; and it is quite unable to discern its other faults, oftenconsidering them to be signs of progress, and in its wretchedness it is not ashamed to defend them heatedly.

28. Only the Holy Spirit can purify the intellect, for unless a greater power comes and overthrows the despoiler,what he has taken captive will never be set free (cf Luke 11:21-22). In every way, therefore, and especially throughpeace of soul, we must make ourselves a dwelling-place for the Holy Spirit. Then we shall have the lamp of spiritualknowledge burning always within us; and when it is shining constantly in the inner shrine of the soul, not only willthe intellect perceive all the dark and bitter attacks of the demons, but these attacks will be greatly weakened whenexposed for what they are by that glorious and holy light. That is why the Apostle says: 'Do not quench the Spirit' (1Thess. 5:19), meaning: 'Do not grieve the goodness of the Holy Spirit by wicked actions or wicked thoughts, lestyou be deprived of this protecting light.' The Spirit, since He is eternal and life-creating, cannot be quenched; but ifHe is grieved - that is if He

withdraws - He leaves the intellect without the light of spiritual knowledge, dark and fullof gloom.

29. The loving and Holy Spirit of God teaches us, as we have said, that the perceptive faculty natural to our soulis single; indeed.

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even the five bodily senses differ from each other only because of the body's varying needs. But this single facultyof perception is split because of the dislocation which, as a result of Adam's disobedience, takes place in the intellectthrough the modes in which the soul now operates. Thus one side of the soul is carried away by the passionate partin man, and we are then captivated by the good things of this life, but the other side of the soul frequently delights inthe activity of the intellect and, as a result, when we practice self-restraint, the intellect longs to pursue heavenlybeauty. If, therefore, we learn persistently to be detached from the good things of this world, we shall be able tounite the earthly appetite of the soul to its spiritual and intellectual aspiration, through the communion of the HolySpirit who brings this about within us. For unless His divinity actively illumines the inner shrine of our heart, weshall not be able to taste God's goodness with the perceptive faculty undivided, that is, with unified aspiration.

30. The perceptive faculty of the intellect consists in the power to discriminate accurately between the tastes ofdifferent realities. Our physical sense of taste, when we are healthy, leads us to distinguish unfailingly between goodfood and bad, so that we want what is good: similarly, our intellect, when it begins to act vigorously and withcomplete detachment, is capable of perceiving the wealth of God's grace and is never led astray by any illusion ofgrace which comes from the devil. Just as the body, when it tastes the delectable foods of this earth, knows byexperience exactly what each thing is, so the intellect, when it has triumphed over the thoughts of the flesh, knowsfor certain when it is tasting the grace of the Holy Spirit; for it is written: 'Taste and see that the Lord is good' (Ps.34:8). The intellect keeps fresh the memory of this taste through the energy of love, and so

unerringly chooses whatIS best. As St Paul says: 'This is my prayer, that your love may grow more and more in knowledge and in allperception, so that you choose what is best' (Phil. 1:9-10).

31. When our intellect begins to perceive the grace of the Holy Spirit, then Satan, too, importunes the soul with asense of deceptive sweetness in the quiet times of the night, when we fall into a light kind of sleep. If the intellect atthat time cleaves fervently to the remembrance of the glorious and holy name of the Lord Jesus and uses it as aweapon against Satan's deception, he gives up this trick

and for the future will attack the soul directly and personally. As a result the intellect clearly discerns the deceptionof the evil one and advances even further in the art of discrimination.

32. The experience of true grace comes to us when the body is awake or else on the point of falling asleep, whilein fervent remembrance of God we are welded to His love. But the illusion of grace comes to us, as 1 have said,when we fall into a light sleep while our remembrance of God is half-hearted. True grace, since its source is God,gladdens us consciously and impels us towards love with great rapture of soul. The illusion of grace, on the otherhand, tends to shake the soul with the winds of deceit: for when the intellect is strong in the remembrance of God,the devil tries to rob it of its experience of spiritual perception by taking advantage of the body's need for sleep. Ifthe intellect at that time is remembering the Lord Jesus attentively, it easily destroys the enemy's seductivesweetness and advances joyfully to do battle with him, armed not only with grace but also with a second weapon,the confidence gained from its own experience.

33. Sometimes the soul is kindled into love for God and, free from all fantasy and image, moves untroubled bydoubt towards Him; and it draws, as it were, the body with it into the depths of that ineffable love. This may occurwhen the person is awake or else beginning to fall asleep under the influence of God's

grace, in the way I haveexplained. At the same time, the soul is aware of nothing except what it is moving towards. When we experiencethings in this manner, we can be sure that it is the energy of the Holy Spirit within us. For when the soul iscompletely permeated with that ineffable sweetness, at that moment it can think of nothing else, since it rejoiceswith uninterrupted joy. But if at that moment the intellect conceives any doubt or unclean thought, and if this continues in spite of the fact that the intellect calls on the holy name -not now simply out of love for God, but in order torepel the evil one - then it should realize that the sweetness it experiences is an illusion of grace, coming from thedeceiver with a counterfeit joy. Through this joy, amorphous and disordered, the devil tries to lead the soul into anadulterous union with himself. For when he sees the intellect unreservedly proud of its own experience of spiritualperception, he entices the soul by means of certain plausible illusions of grace, so that it is seduced by that dank anddebilitating sweetness

and fails to notice its intercourse with the deceiver. From all this we can distinguish between the Spirit of truth andthe spirit of error. It is impossible, however, for someone consciously to taste the divine goodness or consciously torealize when he is experiencing the bitterness of the demons, unless he first knows with assurance that grace dwellsin the depths of his intellect, while the wicked spirits cluster round only the outside of the heart. This is just what thedemons do not want us to know, for fear that our intellect, once definitely aware of it, will arm itself against themwith the remembrance of God.

34. The natural love of the soul is one thing, and the love which comes to it from the Holy Spirit is another. Theactivity of the first depends on the assent of our will to our desire. For this reason it is easily taken over andperverted by evil spirits when we do not keep firmly to our chosen course. But the love which comes from the HolySpirit so inflames the soul that all its parts cleave ineffably and with utter simplicity to the delight of its love andlonging for the divine. The intellect then becomes pregnant through the energy of the Holy Spirit and

overflows witha spring of love and joy.

35. Just as a rough sea naturally subsides when oil is poured upon it, so the soul readily grows calm whenanointed with the grace of the Holy Spirit. For it submits joyfully to the dispassionate and ineffable grace whichovershadows it, in accordance with the Psalmist's words: 'My soul, be obedient to God' (Ps. 62:5. LXX). As a result,no matter how greatly it is provoked by the demons, the soul remains free from anger and is filled with the greatestjoy. No man can enter or remain in such a state unless he sweetens his soul continually with the fear of God; for thefear of the Lord Jesus confers a measure of purity on those pursuing the spiritual way. 'The fear of the Lord is pure,and endures for ever' (Ps. 19:9. LXX).

36. Let no one who hears us speak of the perceptive faculty of the intellect imagine that by this we mean that theglory of God appears to man visibly. We do indeed affirm that the soul, when pure, perceives God's grace, tasting itin some ineffable manner; but no invisible reality appears to it in a visible form, since now 'we walk by faith, not bysight', as St Paul says (2 Cor. 5:7) light or some fiery form should be seen by one pursuing the spiritual way, heshould not on any account accept such a vision: it is an obvious deceit of the enemy. Many indeed have had thisexperience and, in

their ignorance, have turned aside from the way of truth. We ourselves know, however, that so long as we dwell inthis corruptible body, 'we are absent from the Lord' (2 Cor. 5:6) - that is to say, we know that we cannot see visiblyeither God Himself or any of His celestial wonders.

37. The dreams which appear to the soul through God's love are unerring criteria of its health. Such dreams do notchange from one shape to another; they do not shock our inward sense, resound with laughter or suddenly becomethreatening. But with great gentleness they approach the soul and fill it with spiritual gladness. As a result, evenafter the body has woken up, the soul longs to

recapture the joy given to it by the dream. Demonic fantasies,however, are just the opposite: they do not keep the same shape or maintain a constant form for long. For what thedemons do not possess as their chosen mode of life, but merely assume because of their inherent deceitfulness, is notable to satisfy them for very long. They shout and menace, often transforming themselves into soldiers andsometimes deafening the soul with their cries. But the intellect, when pure, recognizes them for what they are andawakes the body from its dreams. Sometimes it even feels joy at having been able to see through their tricks: indeedit often challenges them during the dream itself and thus provokes them to great anger. There are, however, timeswhen even good dreams do not bring joy to the soul, but produce in it a sweet sadness and tears unaccompanied bygrief But this happens only to those who are far advanced in humility.

38. We have now explained the distinction between good and bad dreams, as we ourselves heard it from thosewith experience. In our quest for purity, however, the safest rule is never to trust to anything that appears to us in ourdreams. For dreams are generally nothing more than images reflecting our wandering thoughts, or else they are themockery of demons. And if ever God in His goodness were to send us some vision and we were to refuse it, ourbeloved Lord Jesus would not be angry with us, for He would know we were acting in this way because of the tricksof the demons. Although the distinction between types of dreams established above is precise, it sometimes happensthat when the soul has been sullied by an unperceived beguilement - something from which no one, it seems to me,is exempt - it loses its sense of accurate discrimination and mistakes bad dreams for good.

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39. As an illustration of what I mean, take the case of the servant whose master, returning at night after a longabsence abroad, calls to him from outside his house. The servant categorically refuses to open the door to him, for heis afraid of being deceived by some similarity of voice, and so of betraying to someone else the goods his master hasentrusted to him. Not only is his master in no way

angry with him when day comes; but on the contrary he evenpraises him highly, because in his concern not to lose any of his master's goods he even suspected the sound of hismaster's voice to be a trick.

40. You should not doubt that the intellect, when it begins to be strongly energized by the divine light, becomesso completely translucent that it sees its own light vividly. This takes place when the power of the soul gains controlover the passions. But when St Paul says that 'Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light' (2 Cor. 11: 14), hedefinitely teaches us that everything which appears to the intellect, whether as light or as fire, if it has a shape, is theproduct of the evil artifice of the enemy. So we should not embark on the ascetic life in the hope of seeing visionsclothed with form or shape; for if we do, Satan will find it easy to lead our soul astray. Our one purpose must be toreach the point when we perceive the love of God fully and consciously in our heart - that is, 'with all your heart.

and with all your soul . . . and with all your mind' (Luke 10:27). For the man who is energized by the grace of Godto this point has already left this world, though still present in it.

41. It is well known that obedience is the chief among the initiatory virtues, for first it displaces presumption andthen it engenders humility within us. Thus it becomes, for those who willingly embrace it, a door leading to the loveof God. It was because he rejected humility that Adam fell into the lowest depths of Hades. It was because He lovedhumility that the Lord, in accordance with the divine purpose, was obedient to His Father even to the cross anddeath, although He was in no way inferior to the Father; and so through His own obedience He has freed mankindfrom the crime of disobedience and leads back to the blessedness of eternal life all who live in obedience. Thushumility should be the first concern of those who are fighting the presumption of the devil, for as we advance it willbe a sure guide to all the paths of virtue.

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42. Self-control is common to all the virtues, and therefore whoever practices self-control must do so in all things.If any part, however small, of a man's body is removed, the whole man is disfigured; likewise, he who disregardsone single virtue destroys unwittingly the whole harmonious order of self-control. It is therefore necessary tocultivate not only the bodily virtues, but also those which have the power to purify our inner man. What is the goodof a man keeping the virginity of his body if he lets his soul commit adultery with the demon of disobedience? Orwhat is the good of a man controlling gluttony and his other bodily desires if he makes no effort to avoid vanity andself-esteem, and does not endure with patience even the slightest affliction? At the judgment what crown will hedeserve, when a just reward is given only to those who have accomplished works of righteousness in a spirit ofhumility?

43. Those pursuing the spiritual way should train themselves to hate all uncontrolled desires until this hatredbecomes habitual. With regard to self-control in eating, -we must never feel loathing for any kind of food, for to doso is abominable and utterly demonic. It is emphatically not because any kind of food is bad in itself that we refrainfrom it. But by not eating too much or too richly we can to some extent keep in check the excitable parts of ourbody. In addition we can give to the poor what remains over, for this is the mark of sincere love.

44. It is in no way contrary to the principles of true knowledge to eat and drink from all that is set before you,giving thanks to God; for 'everything is very good' (cf Gen. 1:31). But gladly to abstain from eating too pleasurablyor too much shows greater discrimination and understanding. However, we shall not gladly detach ourselves fromthe pleasures of this life unless we have fully and consciously tasted the sweetness of God.

45. When heavy with over-eating, the body makes the intellect spiritless and sluggish; likewise, when weakenedby excessive abstinence, the body makes the contemplative faculty of the soul dejected and disinclined toconcentrate. We should therefore regulate our food according to the condition of the body, so that it is appropriatelydisciplined when in good health and adequately nourished when weak. The body of one pursuing the spiritual waymust not be enfeebled; he must have enough strength for his labors.

so that the soul may be suitably purified through bodily exertion as well.

46. When, as a result of visits from some of our brethren or some strangers, we are fiercely attacked by thoughtsof self-esteem, it is good to relax our normal regime to a certain extent. In this way the demon will be frustrated anddriven out, regretting his attempt:

moreover, we shall properly fulfill the rule of love, and by relaxing our usual practice we shall keep hidden themystery of our self-control.

47. Fasting, while of value in itself, is not something to boast of in front of God, for it is simply a tool for trainingthose who desire self-restraint. The ascetic should not feel proud because he fasts; but with faith in God he shouldthink only of reaching his goal. For no artist ever boasts that his accomplishment is simply due to his tools; but hewaits for the work itself to give proof of his skill.

48. When watered in due measure the earth yields a good, clean crop from the seed sown in it; but when it issoaked with torrential rain it bears nothing but thistles and thorns. Likewise, when we drink wine in due measure,the earth of the heart yields a clean crop from its natural seed and produces a fine harvest from what is sown in it bythe Holy Spirit. But if it is soaked through excessive drinking, the thoughts, it bears will be nothing but thistles andthorns.

49. When our intellect is swimming in the waves of excessive drink, it not only regards with passion the imagesformed in it by the demons while we sleep, but also itself forms attractive appearances, treating its own fantasies asif they were women whom it ardently loved. For when the sexual organs are heated by wine, the intellect cannotavoid forming in itself pleasurable pictures reflecting our passion. So we must keep due measure and escape theharm that comes from excess. For when the intellect is not affected by the pleasure that seduces it to the picturing ofsin, it remains completely free from fantasy and debility.

50. People, who wish to discipline the sexual organs should avoid drinking those artificial concoctions which arecalled 'aperitifs' - presumably because they open

a way to the stomach for the vast meal which is to follow. Not onlyare they harmful to our bodies, but their fraudulent and artificial character greatly offends the conscience whereinGod dwells. For what does wine lack that we

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should sap its healthy vigor by adulterating it with a variety of condiments?

51. Jesus Christ, our Lord and Teacher in this holy way of life, was offered vinegar to drink during His Passionby those executing the devil's orders, and thus He left us, it seems to me, a clear example for spiritual combat. Thosestruggling against sin should not. He says, indulge themselves in agreeable food and drink, but should patiently bearthe bitterness of the warfare. Hyssop, too, must be added to the sponge of ignominy (cf John 19:29), so that thepattern of our purification may conform perfectly to His example; for sharpness pertains to spiritual combat, just aspurification does to being made perfect.

52. No one would maintain that it is strange or sinful to take baths, but to refrain from them out of self-control Iregard as a sign of great restraint and determination. For then our body will not be debilitated by this self-indulgencein hot and steamy water; neither shall we be reminded of Adam's ignoble nakedness, and so have to cover ourselveswith leaves as he did. All this is especially important for us, who have recently renounced the vileness of this fallenlife, and ought to be acquiring the beauty of self-restraint through the purity of our body.

53. There is nothing to prevent us from calling a doctor when we are ill. Since Providence has implanted remediesin nature, it has been possible for human experimentation to develop the art of medicine. All the same, we shouldnot place our hope of healing in doctors, but in our true Savior and Doctor, Jesus Christ. I say this to those who

practice self-control in monastic communities or towns, for because of their environment they cannot at all timesmaintain the active working of faith through

love. Furthermore, they should not succumb to the conceit andtemptation of the devil, which have led some of them publicly to boast that they have had no need of doctors formany years. If, on the other hand, someone is living as a hermit in more deserted places together with two or threelike-minded brethren, whatever sufferings may befall him let him draw near in faith to the only Lord who can heal'every kind of sickness and disease' (Matt. 4:23). For besides the Lord he has the desert itself to provide sufficientconsolation in his illness. In such a person faith is always actively at work, and in addition he has no scope todisplay the fine quality of his patience before others, because

he is protected by the desert. For 'the Lord settles the solitaries in a dwelling' (Ps. 68:6. LXX).

54. When we become unduly distressed at falling ill, we should recognize that our soul is still the slave of bodilydesires and so longs for physical health, not wishing to lose the good things of this life and even finding it a greathardship not to be able to enjoy them because of illness. If, however, the soul accepts thankfully the pains of illness,it is clear that it is not far from the realm of dispassion; as a result it even waits joyfully for death as the entry into alife that is more true.

55. The soul will not desire to be separated from the body unless it becomes indifferent to the very air it breathes.All the bodily senses are opposed to faith, for they are concerned with the objects of this present world, while faith isconcerned only with the blessings of the life to come. Thus one pursuing the spiritual way should never be toogreatly preoccupied with beautifully branched or shady trees, pleasantly flowing springs, Iloweiy meadows, finehouses or even visits to his family, neither should he recall any public honors that he happens to have been given.He should gratefully be content with bare necessities, regarding this present life as a road passing through an alienland, barren of all worldly attractions. For it is only by concentrating our mind in this way that we can keep to theroad that leads back to eternity.

56. Eve is the first to teach us that sight, taste and the other senses, when used without moderation, distract theheart from its remembrance of God. So long as she did not look with longing at the forbidden tree, she was able tokeep God's commandment carefully in mind; she was still covered by the wings of divine love and thus was ignorantof her own nakedness. But after she had looked at the tree with longing, touched it with ardent desire and then tastedits fruit with active sensuality, she at once felt drawn to physical intercourse and, being naked, she gave way to herpassion. All her desire was now to enjoy what was immediately present to her senses, and through the pleasantappearance of the fruit she involved Adam in her fall. Thereafter it became hard for man's intellect to remember Godor His commandments. We should therefore always be looking into the depths of our heart with continuedremembrance of God, and should pass through this deceitful life like men who have lost their sight. It is the mark oftrue spiritual wisdom always to

clip the wings of our love for visible appearances, and this is what Job, in his great experience, refers to when he

says: 'If my heart has followed my eye . . ' (Job 31:7. LXX). To master ourselves in this way is evidence of thegreatest self-control.

57. He who dwells continually within his own heart is detached from the attractions of this world, for he lives inthe Spirit and cannot know the desires of the flesh. Such a man henceforward walks up and down within the fortressof the virtues which keep guard at all the gates of his purity. The assaults of the demons are now ineffective againsthim, even though the arrows of sensual desire reach as far as the doorways of his senses.

58. When our soul begins to lose its appetite for earthly beauties, a spirit of listlessness is apt to steal into it. Thisprevents us from taking pleasure in study and teaching, and from feeling any strong desire for the blessings preparedfor us in the life to come: it also leads us to disparage this transient life excessively, as

not possessing anything ofvalue. It even depreciates spiritual knowledge itself, either on the grounds that many others have already acquired itor because it cannot teach us anything perfect. To avoid this passion, which dejects and enervates us, we mustconfine the mind within very narrow limits, devoting ourselves solely to the remembrance of God. Only in this waywill the intellect be able to regain its original fervor and escape this senseless dissipation.

59. When we have blocked all its outlets by means of the remembrance of God, the intellect requires of usimperatively some task which will satisfy its need for activity. For the complete fulfillment of its purpose we shouldgive it nothing but the prayer "Lord Jesus', 'No one', it is written, 'can say "Lord Jesus" except in the Holy Spirit' (1Cor. 12:3). Let the intellect continually concentrate on these words within its inner shrine with such intensity that itis not turned aside to any mental images. Those who meditate unceasingly upon this glorious and holy name in thedepths of their heart can sometimes see the light of their own intellect. For when the mind is closely concentratedupon this name, then we grow fully conscious that the name is burning up all the filth which covers the surface ofthe soul; for it is written: 'Our God is a consuming fire' (Deut. 4:24). Then the Lord awakens in the soul a great lovefor His glory: for when the intellect with fervor of heart maintains persistently its remembrance of the preciousname, then that name

implants in us a constant love for its goodness, since there is nothing now that stands in the way. This is the pearl ofgreat price which a man can acquire by selling all that he has, and so experience the inexpressible joy of making ithis own (cf Matt. 13:46).

60. Initiatory joy is one thing, the joy of perfection is another. The first is not exempt from fantasy, while thesecond has the strength of humility. Between the two joys comes a 'godly sorrow' (2 Cor. 7:10) and active tears: 'Forin much wisdom is much knowledge: and he that increases knowledge increases sorrow' (Eccles. 1:18). The soul,then, is first summoned to the struggle by the initiatory

joy and then rebuked and tested by the truth of the HolySpirit, as regards both its past sins and the vain distractions in which it still indulges. For it is written: 'With rebukesThou hast corrected man for iniquity, and made his soul waste away like a spider's web' (Ps. 39: n. LXX). In thismanner the soul is tested by divine rebuke as in a furnace, and through fervent remembrance of God it activelyexperiences the joy exempt from fantasy.

61. When the soul is disturbed by anger, confused by drunkenness, or sunk in deep depression, the intellectcannot hold fast to the remembrance of God no matter how hard we try to force it. Completely darkened by theviolence of the passions, it loses totally the form of perception which is proper to it. Thus our desire that our intellectshould keep the remembrance of God cannot make any impression, because the recoUective faculty of our mind hasbeen hardened by the rawness of the passions. But, on the other hand, when the soul has attained freedom from thesepassions, then, even though the intellect is momentarily deprived by forgetfulness of the object of its longing, it at

once resumes its proper activity. The soul now has grace itself to share its meditation and to repeat with it the words'Lord Jesus', just as a mother teaches her child to repeat with her the word 'father', instead of prattling in his usualway, until she has formed in him the habit of calling for his father even in his sleep. This is why the Apostle says:'Likewise the Spirit also helps our infirmities: for we do not know what to pray for as we should, but the SpiritHimself makes intercession for us with cries that cannot be uttered' (Rom. 8:26). Since we are but children asregards perfection in the virtue of prayer, we have need of the Spirit's aid so that all our thoughts may beconcentrated and

gladdened by His inexpressible sweetness, and so that with all our being we may aspire to the remembrance andlove of our God and Father. For, as St Paul says, it is in the Spirit that we pray when we are taught by Him to crywithout ceasing to God the Father, 'Abba, Father' (Rom. 8:15).

62. The incensive power usually troubles and confuses the soul more than any other passion, yet there are timeswhen it greatly benefits the soul. For when with inward calm we direct it against blasphemers or other sinners inorder to induce them to mend their ways or at least feel some shame, we make our soul more gentle. In this way weput ourselves completely in harmony with the purposes of God's justice and goodness. In addition, throughbecoming deeply angered by sin we often overcome weaknesses in our soul. Thus there is no doubt that if, whendeeply depressed, we become indignant in spirit against the demon of corruption, this gives us the strength todespise even the presumptuousness of death. In order to make this clear, the Lord twice became indignant againstdeath and troubled in spirit (cf John 12:27, 13:21); and despite the fact that, untroubled. He could by a simple act ofwill do all that He wished, none the less when He restored Lazarus' soul to his body He was indignant and troubledin spirit (cf. John 11:33)- which seems to me to show that a controlled incensive power is a weapon implanted in ournature by God when He creates us. If Eve had used this weapon against the serpent, she would not have beenimpelled by sensual desire. In my view, then, the man who in a spirit of devotion makes controlled use of hisincensive power will without doubt be judged more favorably than the man who, because of the inertness of hisintellect, has never become incensed. The latter seems to have an inexperienced driver in charge of his emotions,while the former, always ready for action, drives the horses of virtue through the midst of the demonic host, guidingthe four-horsed chariot of self-control in the fear of God. This chariot is called 'the chariot of Israel" in thedescription of the taking up of the prophet Elijah (cf. 2 Kgs. 2:12);

for God spoke clearly about the four cardinal virtues first of all to the Jews. This is precisely why Elijah ascended ina fiery chariot, guiding his own virtues as horses, when he was carried up by the Spirit in a gust of fire.

63. Whoever has participated in divine knowledge and tasted the sweetness of God should not defend himself inlaw, and still less

prosecute, even though someone should go so far as to strip him of his clothes. The justice of the rulers of this worldis in every way inferior to that of God or, rather, it is as nothing when compared with it. For what is the difference

between the children of God and those of this world, if it is not that the justice of the latter appears imperfect whencompared with that of the former, so that we call the one human and the other divine? Thus it was that our LordJesus, 'when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered. He did not threaten' (1 Pet. 2:23); He evenkept silent when stripped of His clothes and, what is more, prayed to His Father for the salvation of those who weremaltreating Him. The men of this world, however, never stop going to court unless, as sometimes happens, they aregiven out of court more than they are actually claiming, especially if they have already been receiving interest on thesum involved. In such cases, their justice often becomes the occasion for great injustice.

64. I have heard certain pious men declare that, when people rob us of what we possess for our own support or forthe relief of the poor, we should prosecute them, especially if the culprits are Christians; for, it is argued, not toprosecute might encourage crime in those who have wronged us. But this is simply a specious excuse for preferringone's possessions to one's self For if I abandon prayer and cease to guard the door of my heart, and begin to bringcases against those who wrong me, frequenting the corridors of the courts, it is clear that I regard the goods which Iclaim as more important than my own salvation - more important even than the commandment of Christ. For howcan I possibly follow the mjunction: 'When someone takes away your goods, do not try to recover them' (Luke6:30), unless I gladly endure their loss? Even if we do go to court and recover all we claim, we do not thereby freethe criminal from his sin. Human tribunals cannot circumscribe the eternal justice of God, and the accused ispunished only according to those laws under which his case is heard. It is therefore better to endure the lawlessnessof those who wish to wrong us, and to pray for them, so that they may be released from their guilt throughrepentance, rather than through restoring what they have taken. Divine justice requires that we receive back not theobjects of theft, but the thief himself, freed through repentance from sin.

65. Once the spiritual way has become a reality for us, we shall

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End it proper and helpful to follow the Lord's commandment and sell all our possessions immediately, distributingthe money we receive (cf Matt. 19:21), rather than to neglect this mjunction on the excuse that we wish always tobe in a position to obey the commandments. In the first place, this will secure our complete detachment, and apoverty which is in consequence invulnerable and impervious to all lawlessness and litigation, since we no longerhave the possessions which kindle the fire of crime in others. Then, more than all the other virtues, humility willwarm and cherish us;

in our nakedness she will give us rest in her bosom, like a mother who takes her child into her arms and warms itwhen, with childish simplicity, it has pulled off what it is wearing and thrown it away, innocently delighting more innakedness than in pretty clothes. For it is written: 'The Lord preserves the little ones; I humbled myself and Hesaved me'(Ps. 116:6. LXX).

66. The Lord will demand from us an account of our help to the needy according to what we have and notaccording to what we have not (cf. 2 Cor. 8:12). If, then, from fear of God I distribute in a short space of time what Imight have given away over many years, on what grounds can I be accused, seeing that I now have nothing? On theother hand, it might be argued: 'Who now will give help to the needy that depend on regular gifts out of my modestmeans?' A person who argues in this way must learn not to insult God because of his own love of money. God willnot fail to provide for His own creation as He has done from the beginning; for before this or that person wasprompted to give help, the needy did not lack food or clothing. Understanding this, we should reject, in a spirit oftrue service, the senseless presumption which arises from wealth and we should hate our own desires - which is tohate our own soul (cf Luke 14:26). Then, no longer possessing wealth which we enjoy distributing, we shall beginto feel our worthlessness intensely, because we find we cannot now perform any good works. Certainly, provided

there is some good in us, we gladly obey the divine command and, as long as we are well off, we enjoy giving thingsaway. But when we have exhausted

everything an ill-defined gloom and a sense of abasement come over us,because we think we are doing nothing worthy of God's righteousness. In this deep abasement the soul returns toitself, so as to procure through the labor of prayer, through patience and humility what it can no longer acquire bythe

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daily giving of help to the needy. For it is written: 'The poor and needy shall praise Thy name, 0 Lord' (Ps. 74:21.LXX). God is not prepared to grant the gift of theology to anyone who has not first prepared himself by giving awayall his possessions for the glory of the Gospel: then in godly poverty he can proclaim the riches of the divinekingdom. This is made clear in the Psalm, for after the words '0 God, in Thy love Thou hast provided for the poor', itcontmues, 'The Lord shall give speech to those who proclaim the gospel with great power' (Ps. 68:10-11. LXX).

67. All God's gifts of grace are flawless and the source of everything good: but the gift which inflames our heartand moves it to the love of His goodness more than any other is theology. It is the early offspring of God's grace andbestows on the soul the greatest gifts. First of all, it leads us gladly to disregard all love of this life, since in the placeof perishable desires we possess inexpressible riches, the oracles of God. Then it embraces our intellect with thelight of a transforming fire, and so makes it a partner of the angels in their liturgy. Therefore, when we have beenmade ready, we begin to long sincerely for this gift of contemplative vision, for it is full of beauty, frees us fromevery worldly care, and nourishes the intellect with divine truth in the radiance of inexpressible light. In brief, it isthe gift which, through the help of the holy prophets, unites the deiform soul with God in unbreakable communion.So, among men as among angels, divine theology — like one who conducts the wedding feast - brings into harmonythe voices of those who praise God's majesty.

68. Our intellect often finds it hard to endure praying because of the straightness and concentration which thisinvolves: but it joyfully turns to theology because of the broad and unhampered scope of divine speculation.Therefore, so as to keep

the intellect from expressing itself too much in words or exalting itself unduly in its joy, weshould spend most of our time in prayer, in singing psalms and reading the Holy Scriptures, yet without neglectingthe speculations of wise men whose faith has been revealed in their writings. In this way we shall prevent theintellect from confusing its own utterances with the utterances of grace, and stop it from being led astray by self-esteem and dispersed through over-elation and loquacity. In the time of contemplation we must keep the intellectfree of all fantasy and image, and so ensure that with almost all our

thoughts we shed tears. When it is at peace in times of stillness, and above all when it is gladdened by the sweetnessof prayer, not only does it escape the faults we have mentioned, but it is more and more renewed in its swift andeffortless understanding of divine truth, and with great humility it advances in its knowledge of discrimination.There is, moreover, a prayer which is above even the broadest scope of speculation: but this prayer is granted only tothose who fully and consciously perceive the plenitude of God's grace within them.

69. At the start of the spiritual way, the soul usually has the conscious experience of being illumined with its ownlight through the action of grace. But, as it advances further in its struggle to attain theology, grace works itsmysteries within the soul for the most part without its knowledge. Grace acts in these two ways so that it may firstset us rejoicing on the path of contemplation, calling us from ignorance to spiritual knowledge, and so that in themidst of our struggle it may then keep this knowledge free from arrogance. On the one hand, we need to besomewhat saddened by feeling ourselves abandoned, so that we become more humble and submit to the glory of theLord; on the other hand, we need to be gladdened at the right time through being lifted up by hope. For just as greatsadness brings the soul to despair and loss of faith, so great joy incites it to presumption (I am speaking of those whoare still beginners). Midway between illumination and abandonment lies the experience of trial, and midwaybetween sadness and joy lies hope. This is why the Psalmist says: 'I waited patiently for

the Lord; and He heard me'(Ps. 40: 1); and again: 'According to the multitude of the sufferings in my heart. Thy blessings have gladdened mysoul'CPs. 94:19. LXX).

70. When the door of the steam baths is continually left open, the heat inside rapidly escapes through it; likewisethe soul, in its desire to say many things, dissipates its remembrance of God through the door of speech, even thougheverything it says may be good. Thereafter the intellect, though lacking appropriate ideas, pours out a welter ofconfused thoughts to anyone it meets, as it no longer has the Holy Spirit to keep its understanding free from fantasy.Ideas of value always shun verbosity, being foreign to confusion and fantasy. Timely silence, then, is precious, for itis nothing less than the mother of the wisest thoughts.

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71. Spiritual knowledge teaches us that, at the outset, the soul in pursuit of theology is troubled by many passions,above all by anger and hatred. This happens to it not so much because the demons are arousing these passions, asbecause it is making progress. So long as the soul is worldly-minded, it remains unmoved and untroubled howevermuch it sees people trampling justice under foot. Preoccupied with its own desires, it pays no attention to the justiceof God. When, however, because of its disdain for this world and its love for God, it begins to rise above itspassions, it cannot bear, even in its dreams, to see justice set at naught. It becomes infuriated with evil-doers andremains angry until it sees the violators of justice forced to make amends. This, then, is why it hates the unjust andloves the just. The eye of the soul cannot be led astray when its veil, by which I mean the body, is refined to near-transparency through self-control. Nevertheless, it is much better to lament the insensitivity of the unjust than to hatethem; for even should they deserve our hatred, it is senseless for a soul which loves God to be disturbed by hatred,since when hatred is present in the soul spiritual knowledge is paralyzed.

72. The theologian whose soul is gladdened and kindled by the oracles of God

comes, when the time is ripe, tothe realm of dispassion; for it is written: 'The oracles of the Lord are pure, as silver when tried in fire, and purged ofearth' (Ps. 12:6. LXX). The Gnostic, for his part, rooted in his direct experience of spiritual knowledge, isestablished above the passions. The theologian, if he humbles himself, may also savor the experience of spiritualknowledge, while the Gnostic, if he acquires faultless discrimination, may by degrees attain the virtue of theologicalcontemplation. These two gifts, theology and gnosis, never occur in all their fullness in the same person; buttheologian and Gnostic each marvel at what the other enjoys to a greater degree, so that humility and desire forholiness increase in both of them. That is why the Apostle says:

'For to one is given by the Spirit the principle of wisdom; to another the principle of spiritual knowledge by the sameSpirit'(1 Cor. 12:8).

73. When a person is in a state of natural well-being, he sings the psalms with a full voice and prefers to pray out

loud. But when he is energized by the Holy Spirit, with gladness and completely at peace he sings and prays in theheart alone. The first condition is accom-

panied by a delusory joy, the second by spiritual tears and, thereafter, by a delight that loves stillness. For theremembrance of God, keeping its fervor because the voice is restrained, enables the heart to have thoughts that bringtears and are peaceful. In this way, with tears we sow seeds of prayer in the earth of the heart, hoping to reap theharvest in joy (cf Ps. 126:5). But when we are weighed down by deep despondency, we should for a while singpsalms out loud, raising our voice with joyful expectation until the thick mist is dissolved by the warmth of song.

74. When the soul has reached self-understanding, it produces from within a certain feeling of warmth for God.When this warmth is not disturbed by worldly cares, it gives birth to a desire for peace which, so far as its strengthallows,

searches out the God of peace. But it is quickly robbed of this peace, either because our attention isdistracted by the senses or because nature, on account of its basic insufficiency, soon exhausts itself. This was whythe wise men of Greece could not possess as they should what they hoped to acquire through their self-control, forthe eternal wisdom which is the fullness of truth was not at work within their intellect. On the other hand, the feelingof warmth which the Holy Spirit engenders in the heart is completely peaceful and enduring. It awakes in all parts ofthe soul a longing for God; its heat does not need to be fanned by anything outside the heart, but through the heart itmakes the whole man rejoice with a boundless love. Thus, while recognizing the first kind of warmth, we shouldstrive to attain the second: for although natural love is evidence that our nature is in a healthy state through self-control, nevertheless such love lacks the power, which spiritual love possesses, to bring the intellect to the state ofdispassion.

75. When the north wind blows over creation, the air around us remains pure because of this wind's subtle andclarifying nature.

but when the south wind blows, the air becomes hazy because it is this wind's nature to produce mist and., by virtueof its affinity with clouds, to bring them from its own regions to cover the earth. Likewise, when the soul isenergized by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, it is freed completely from the demonic mist; but when the wind oferror blows fiercely upon it, it is completely filled with the clouds of sin. With all our strength, therefore, we should,try always to face towards the life-creating and puriiying wind of the

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Holy Spirit - the wind which the prophet Ezekiel, in the light of spiritual knowledge, saw coming from the north (cfEzek. 1:4). Then the contemplative faculty of the soul will always remain clear, so that we devote ourselvesunerringly to the contemplation of the divine, beholding the world of light in an air filled with light. For this is thelight of true knowledge.

76. Some have imagined that both grace and sin - that is, the spirit of truth and the spirit of error - are hidden atthe same time in the intellect of the baptized. As a result, they say, one of these two spirits urges the intellect togood, the other to evil. But from Holy Scripture and through the intellect's own insight I have come to understand

things differently. Before holy baptism, grace encourages the soul towards good from the outside, while Satan lurksin its depths, trying to block all the intellect's ways of approach to the divine. But from the moment that we arereborn through baptism, the demon is outside, grace is within. Thus, whereas before baptism error ruled the soul,after baptism truth rules it. Nevertheless, even after baptism Satan still acts on the soul, often, indeed, to a greaterdegree than before. This is not because he is present in the soul together with grace: on the contrary, it is because heuses the body's humors to befog the intellect with the delight of mindless pleasures. God allows him to do this, sothat a man, after passing through a trial of storm and fire, may come in the end to the full enjoyment of divineblessings. For it is written: 'We went through fire and water, and Thou hast brought us out into a place where thesoul is refreshed' (Ps. 66.12. LXX).

77. As we have said, from the instant we are baptized, grace is hidden in the depths of the intellect, concealing itspresence even from the perception of the intellect itself When someone begins, however, to love God with fullresolve, then in a mysterious way, by means of intellectual perception, grace communicates something of its richesto his soul.-Then, if he really wants to hold fast to this discovery, he joyfully starts longing to be rid of all histemporal goods, so as to acquire the field in which he has found the hidden treasure of life (cf. Matt. 13:44). This isbecause, when someone rids himself of all worldly riches, he discovers the place where the grace of God is hidden.For as the soul advances, divine grace more and more reveals itself to the intellect. During this process, however, theLord allows the soul to be pestered increasingly by demons.

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This is to teach it to discriminate correctly between good and evil, and to make it more humble through the deepshame it feels during its purification because of the way in which it is defiled by demonic thoughts.

78. We share in the image of God by virtue of the intellectual activity of our soul: for the body is, as it were, thesoul's dwelling-place. Now as a result of Adam's fall, not only were the lineaments of the form imprinted on the soulbefouled, but our body also became subject to corruption. It was because of this that the holy Logos of God tookflesh and, being God, He bestowed on us through His own baptism the water of salvation, so that we might bereborn. We are reborn through water by the action of the holy and life-creating Spirit, so that if we commit ourselvestotally to God, we are immediately purified in soul and body by the Holy Spirit who now dwells in us and drives outsin. Since the form imprinted on the soul is single and simple, it is not possible, as some have thought, for twocontrary powers to be present in the soul simultaneously. For when through holy baptism divine grace in its infinitelove permeates the lineaments of God's image - thereby renewing in the soul the capacity for attaining the divinelikeness - what place is there for the devil'? For light has nothing in common with darkness (cf 2 Cor. 6:14). Wewho are pursuing the spiritual way believe that the protean serpent is expelled from the shrine of the intellectthrough the waters of baptism; but we must not be surprised if after baptism we still have wicked as well as goodthoughts. For although baptism removes from us the stain resulting from sin, it does not thereby heal the duality ofour will immediately, neither does it prevent the demons from attacking us or speaking deceitful words to us. In thisway we are led to take up the weapons of righteousness, and to preserve through the power of God what we couldnot keep safe through the efforts of our soul alone.

79. Satan is expelled from the soul by holy baptism, but is permitted to act upon it through the body for. thereasons already mentioned. The grace of God, on the other hand, dwells in the very depths of the soul - that is to say,in the intellect. For it is written: 'AH the glory of the king's daughter is within' (Ps. 45:13. LXX), and it is notperceptible to the demons. Thus, when we fervently remember God, we feel divine longing well up within us fromthe depths of our heart. The evil spirits invade and lurk in

the bodily senses, acting through the compliancy of the flesh upon those still immature in soul. According to theApostle, our intellect always delights in the laws of the Spirit (cf Rom. 7:22), while the organs of the flesh allowthemselves to be seduced by enticing pleasures. Furthermore, in those who are advancing in spiritual knowledge,grace brings an ineffable joy to their body through the perceptive faculty of the intellect. But the demons capture thesoul by violence through the bodily senses, especially when they find us faint-hearted in pursuing the spiritual path.They are, indeed, murderers provoking the soul to what it does not want.

80. There are some who allege that the power of grace and the power of sin are present simultaneously in thehearts of the faithful: and to support this they quote the Evangelist who says: And the light shines in the darkness;and the darkness did not grasp it' (John 1:5). In this way they try to justify their view that the divine radiance is in noway defiled by its contact with the devil, no matter how close the divine light in the soul may be to the demonicdarkness. But the very words of the Gospel, show that they have departed from the true meaning of Holy Scripture.When John the Theologian wrote in this way, he meant that the Logos of God chose to manifest the true light tocreation through His own flesh, with great compassion kindling the light of His holy knowledge withm us. But thementality of this world did not grasp the will of God, that is, it did not understand it, since 'the will of the flesh ishostile to God' (Rom. 8:7). Indeed, shortly afterwards the Evangelist goes on to say: 'He was the true light, whoillumines every man that comes into the world '- meaning by this that He guides every man and gives him life - and:'He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, andHis own did not receive Him. But to those who received Him He gave power to become the sons of God, even tothose who believe in His name' (John 1:9-12). Paul, too, interprets the words 'did not grasp it' when he says, 'Not asthough 1 had already grasped it or were already perfect, but 1 press on in the hope of grasping it; for it was to thisend that I have been grasped by Jesus Christ (Phil. 3:12). Thus the Evangelist does not say it is Satan who has failedto grasp the true light. Satan was a stranger to it from the beginning, since it does not shine in him. Rather, theEvangelist is censuring men who hear of the powers and wonders of

the Son of God, and yet in the darkness of their hearts refuse to draw near to the light of spiritual knowledge.

81. Spiritual knowledge teaches us that there are two kinds of evil spirits: some are more subtle, others morematerial in nature. The more subtle demons attack the soul, while the others hold the flesh captive through theirlascivious enticements. Thus there is a complete contrast between the demons that attack the soul and those thatattack the body, even though they have the same propensity to inflict harm on mankind. When grace does not dwellin a man, they lurk like serpents in the depths of the heart, never allowing the soul to aspire towards God. But whengrace is hidden in the intellect, they then move like dark clouds through the different parts of the heart, taking theform of sinful passions or of all kinds of day-dreams, thus distracting the intellect from the remembrance of God andcutting it off from grace. When the passions of our soul, especially presumption, the mother of all evils, are inflamedby the demons that attack the soul, then it is by thinking on the dissolution of our body that we grow ashamed of our

gross love of praise. We should also think about death when the demons that attack the body try to make our heartsseethe with shameful desires, for only the thought of death can nullify all the various influences of the evil spirits bybringing us back to the remembrance of God. If, however, the demons that attack the soul induce in us by thisthought an excessive depreciation of human nature on the grounds that, being mortal, it is valueless - and this iswhat they like to do when we torment them with the thought of death - we should recall the honor and glory of theheavenly kingdom, though without losing sight of the bitter and dreadful aspects of judgment. In this way we bothrelieve our despondency and restrain the frivolity of our hearts.

82. In the Gospels the Lord teaches us that when Satan returns and finds his home swept and empty - finds, that isto say, the heart barren - he then musters seven other spirits and enters it and lurks there, making its last state worsethan

its first (cf Matt. 12:44-45). From this we must understand that so long as the Holy Spirit is in us, Satan cannotenter the depths of the soul and remain there. Paul too clearly conveys this same spiritual understanding. When helooks at the matter from the viewpoint of those still engaged in the ascetic struggle, he says: 'For with the inwardman I delight in the law of God: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law

of my intellect, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members' (Rom. 7; 22—23). Butwhen he looks at it from the viewpoint of those who have attained perfection, he says: 'There is therefore now nocondemnation of those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has freed me from the law of sin and death' (Rom. 8:1 -2). Again, so asto teach us once more that it is through the body that Satan attacks the soul which participates in the Holy Spirit, hesays: 'Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with trath, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, andhaving shod your feet with the gospel of peace, above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be ablequench all the fiery arrows of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is thewordof God'(Eph. 6:14-17).

Captivity is one thing, battle is another. Captivity signifies a violent abduction, while battle indicates a contestbetween equally matched adversaries. For precisely this reason the Apostle says that the devil attacks with fieryarrows those who carry Christ in their souls. For someone who is not at close grips with his enemy uses arrowsagainst him, attacking him from a distance. In the same way, when, because of the presence of grace, Satan can lurkno longer in the intellect of those pursuing a spiritual way, he lurks in the body and exploits its humors, so thatthrough its proclivities he may seduce the soul. We should therefore weaken the body to some extent, so that theintellect does not slide down the smooth path of sensual pleasure because of the body's humors. We should believethe Apostle when he says that the intellect of those pursuing the

spiritual way is energized by divine light, andtherefore obeys and rejoices in the law of God (cf. Rom. 7:22). But the flesh, because of its proclivities, readilyadmits evil spirits, and so is sometimes enticed into serving their wickedness.

Thus it is clear that the intellect cannot be the common dwelling-place of both God and the devil. How can StPaul say that 'with my intellect I serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin' (Rom. 7:25), unless theintellect is completely free to engage in battle with the demons, gladly submitting itself to grace, whereas the body isattracted by the smell of mindless pleasures? He can only say this because the wicked spirits of deception are free tolurk

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in the bodies of those pursuing a spiritual way; 'for I know that in me - that is, in my flesh - there dwells nothinggood' (Rom. 7:18), says the Apostle, referring to those who are resisting and struggling against sin. Here he is notmerely expressing a personal opinion. The demons attack the intellect, but they do so by trying through lascivioustemptations to entice the flesh down the slope of sensual pleasure. It is for a good purpose that the demons areallowed to dwell within the body even of those who are struggling vigorously against sin; for in this way man's freewill is constantly put to the test. If a man, while still alive, can undergo death through his labors, then in his entiretyhe becomes the dwellmg-place of the Holy Spirit; for such a man, before he has died, has already risen from thedead, as was the case with the blessed Apostle Paul and all those who have struggled and are struggling to theutmost against sin.

83. It is true that the heart produces good and bad thoughts from itself (cf Luke 6:45). But it does this not becauseit is the heart's nature to produce evil ideas, but because as a result of the primal deception the remembrance of evilhas become as it were a habit. It conceives most of its evil thoughts, however, as a result of the attacks of thedemons. But we feel that all these evil thoughts arise from the heart, and for this reason some people have inferredthat sin dwells in the intellect along with grace. That is why, in their view, the Lord said: 'But those things

whichproceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evilthoughts, adulteries', and so on (Matt. 15:18-19). They do not realize, however, that the intellect, being highlyresponsive, makes its own the thoughts suggested to it by the demons through the activity of the flesh; and, in a waywe do not understand, the proclivity of the body accentuates this weakness of the soul because of the union betweenthe two. The flesh delights endlessly in being flattered by deception, and it is because of this that the thoughts sownby the demons in the soul appear to come from the heart; and we do indeed make them our own when we consent toindulge in them. This was what the Lord was censuring in the text quoted above, as the words themselves makeevident. Is it not clear that whoever indulges in the thoughts suggested to him by Satan's cunning and engraves themin his heart, produces them thereafter as the result of his own mental activity?

84. The Lord says in the Gospel that a strong man cannot be

xpelled from a house unless someone stronger than himself disarms him, binds him and casts him out (cf Matt.12:29). How, then, can such an intruder, cast out in this shameful way, return and dwell together with the true masterwho now lives freely in his own house? A king, after defeating a rebel who has tried to usurp his throne, does notdream of allowing him to share his palace. Rather, he slays him immediately, or binds him and hands him over to hissoldiers for prolonged torture and a miserable death.

85. The reason why we have both good and wicked thoughts together is not, as some suppose, because the HolySpirit and the devil dwell together in our intellect, but because we have not yet consciously experienced thegoodness of the Lord. As I have said before, grace at first conceals its presence in those who have been baptized,waiting to see which way the soul inclines; but when the whole man has turned towards the Lord, it then reveals tothe heart its presence there with a feeling which words cannot express, once again waiting to see

which way the soulinclines. At the same time, however, it allows the arrows of the devil, to wound the soul at the most inward point ofits sensitivity, so as to make the soul search out God with warmer resolve and more humble disposition. If, then, a

man begins to make progress in keeping the commandments and calls ceaselessly upon the Lord Jesus, the fire ofGod's grace spreads even to the heart's more outward organs of perception, consciously burning up the tares in thefield of the soul. As a result, the demonic attacks cannot now penetrate to the depths of the soul, but can prick onlythat part of it which is subject to passion. When the ascetic has finally acquired all the virtues - and in particular thetotal shedding of possessions - then grace illumines his whole being with a deeper awareness; warming him withgreat love of God. From now on the arrows of the fiery demon are extmguished before they reach the body: for thebreath of the Holy Spirit, arousing in the heart the winds of peace, extinguishes them while they are still in mid-air.Nevertheless, at times God allows the demons to attack even one who has reached this measure of perfection, andleaves his intellect without light, so that his free will shall not be completely constrained by the bonds of grace. Thepurpose of this is not only to lead us to overcome sin through ascetic effort but also to help us advance still further inspiritual experience. For what is considered perfection in a pupil is far from perfect when compared with the

richness of God, who instructs us in a love which would still seek to surpass itself, even if we were able to climb tothe top of Jacob's ladder by our own efforts.

86. The Lord himself declares that Satan fell from heaven like lightning (cf Luke 10:18): this was to prevent him,in his hideous-ness, from looking on the dwelling-places of the holy angels. But if he may not share the company ofthe righteous servants of God, how then can he dwell in the intellect of man together with God Himselt7 It will besaid that this is possible because God recedes a little

and makes room for him. But this explanation is inadequate.For there are two different ways in which God recedes. First He recedes in order to educate us. But this recedingdoes not by any means deprive the soul of divine light. As I have said, all that happens is that grace often hides itspresence from the intellect, so that the soul may advance through resisting the attacks of the demons by seeking helpfrom God with great humility and fear; and in this way it gradually comes to know the wickedness of its enemy. Amother does much the same when she finds her child rebellious over feeding: she pushes it away for a moment sothat, being alarmed by the sight of some animals or rough-looking men, it will return crying with fright to her breast.The second kind of receding is when God withdraws altogether from the soul that does not want Him; and thisindeed delivers the soul captive to the demons. We, however, are not children from whom God has withdrawn -heaven forbid! We believe ourselves to be true children of God's grace, which nurses us by briefly concealing itspresence and then revealing itself once more, so that through its goodness we may grow to our full stature.

87. When God recedes in order to educate us, this brings great sadness, humility and even some measure ofdespair to the soul. The purpose of this is to humble the soul's tendency to vanity and self-glory, for the heart at onceis filled with fear of God, tears of thankfulness, and great longing for the beauty of silence. But the receding due toGod's complete withdrawal fills the soul with despair, unbelief, anger and pride. We who have experienced bothkinds of recedmg should approach God in each case in the appropriate way. In the first case we should offer Himthanks as we plead in our own defense, understanding that He is disciplining our unruly character by concealing Hispresence, so as to teach us, like

a good father, the difference between virtue and vice. In the second case, we should offer Him ceaseless confessionof our sins and incessant tears, and practice a greater seclusion from the world, so that by adding to our labors wemay eventually induce Him to reveal His presence in our hearts as before. Yet we must realize that when there is adirect struggle between Satan and the soul - and I am speaking here of the struggle that takes place when Godrecedes in order

to educate us - then grace conceals itself a little, as I have said, but nevertheless supports the soul ina hidden way, so that in the eyes of its enemies the victory appears to be due to the soul alone.

88. When a man stands out of doors in winter at the break of day, facing the east, the front of his body is warmedby the sun, while his back is still cold because the sun is not on it. Similarly, the heart of those who are beginning toexperience the energy of the Spirit is only partially warmed by God's grace. The result is that, while their intellectbegins to produce spiritual thoughts, the outer parts of the heart continue to produce thoughts after the flesh, sincethe members of the heart have not yet all become fully conscious of the light of God's grace shining upon them.Because some people have not understood this, they have concluded that two beings are fighting one another in theintellect. But just as the man in our illustration both shivers and yet feels warm at the touch of the sun, so the soulmay have both good and evil thoughts simultaneously. Ever since our intellect fell into a state of duality with regardto its modes of knowledge, it has been forced to produce at one and the same moment both good and evil thoughts,even against its own will; and this applies especially in the case of those who have reached a high degree ofdiscrimination. While the mtellect tries to think continually of what is good, it suddenly recollects what is bad, sincefrom the time of Adam's disobedience man's power of dunking has been split into two modes. But when we beginwholeheartedly to carry out the commandments of God, all our organs of perception will become fully conscious ofthe light of grace; grace will consume our thoughts with its flames, sweetening our hearts in the peace ofunintemipted love, and enabling us to think spiritual thoughts and no longer worldly thoughts. These effects of graceare always present in those who are approaching perfection and have the remembrance of the Lord Jesusunceasingly in their hearts.

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89. Divine grace confers on us two gifts through the baptism of regeneration, one being infinitely superior to theother. The first gift is given to us at once,

when grace renews us in the actual waters of baptism and cleanses all thelineaments of our soul, that is, the image of God in us, by washing away every stain of sin. The second -our likenessto God - requires our co-operation. When the intellect begins to perceive the Holy Spirit with full consciousness, weshould realize that grace is beginning to paint the divine likeness over the divine image in us. Artists first draw theoutline of a man in monochrome, and then add one color after another, until little by little they capture the likenessof the subject down to the smallest details. In the same way the grace of God starts by remaking the divine image inman info what it was when he was first created. But when it sees us longing with all our heart for the beauty of thedivine likeness and humbly standing naked in its atelier, then by making one virtue after another come into flowerand exalting the beauty of the soul 'from glory to glory' (2 Cor. 3:18), it depicts the divine likeness on the soul. Ourpower of perception shows us that we are being formed into the divine likeness; but the perfecting of this likenesswe shall know only by the light of grace. For through its power of perception the intellect regains all the virtues,other than spiritual love, as it advances according to a measure and rhythm which cannot be expressed; but no onecan acquire spiritual love unless he experiences fully and clearly the illumination of the Holy Spirit. If the intellectdoes not receive the perfection of the divine likeness through such illumination, although it may have almost every

other virtue, it will still have no share in perfect love. Only when it has been made like God - in so far, of course, asthis is possible - does it bear the likeness of divine love as well. In portraiture, when the full range of colors is addedto the outline, the painter captures the likeness of the subject, even down to the smile. Something similar happens tothose who are being repainted by God's grace in the divine likeness: when the luminosity of lo' e is added, then it isevident that the image has been fully transformed into the beauty of the likeness. Love alone among the virtues canconfer dispassion on the soul, for 'love is the fulfilling of the law' (Rom. 13:10). In this way our inner man isrenewed day by day through the experience of love, and in the perfection of love it finds its own fulfillment.

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90. If we fervently desire holiness, the Holy Spirit at the outset gives the soul a full and conscious taste of God'ssweetness, so that the intellect will know exactly of what the final reward of the spiritual life consists. But later Heoften conceals this precious and life-creating gift. He does this so that, even if we acquire all the other virtues, weshould still regard ourselves as nothing because we have not acquired divine love in a lasting form. It is at this stagethat the demon of hate troubles the soul of the spiritual contestant more and more, leading him to accuse of hatredeven those who love him, and defiling with hatred even the kiss of affection. The soul suffers all the more because itstill preserves the memory of divine love: yet, since it is below the highest level of the spiritual life, it cannotexperience this love actively. It is therefore necessary to work upon the soul forcefully for a while, so that we maycome to taste divine love fully and consciously; for no one can acquire the perfection of love while still in the fleshexcept those saints who suffer to the point of martyrdom, and confess their faith despite all persecution. Whoeverhas reached this state is completely transformed, and does not easily feel desire even for material sustenance. Forwhat desire will someone nourished by divine love feel for such things? It is for this reason that St Paul proclaims tous the future joy of the saints when he says: 'For the kingdom of God is not food and drink, but righteousness, peaceand joy in the Holy Spirit' (Rom. 14:17), which are the fruits of perfect love. Those who have advanced to perfectionare able to taste this love continually, but no one can experience it completely until 'what is mortal in us isswallowed up by life' (2 Cor. 5:4).

91. A man who loves the Lord with unflagging resolve once said to me: 'Because I desired conscious knowledgeof divine love, God granted me a full and active experience of such love. I felt its energy so strongly that my soullonged with an inexpressible joy and love to leave the body and go to the Lord, and to become in a sense unaware ofthis transient form of life.' Once a man has experienced this love, he does not become angry however much he isinsulted and harmed - for one pursuing the spiritual life still suffers such things - but he remains united in love to thesoul of the man who has insulted or harmed him. His anger is kindled only against those who injure the poor or who,as the Scripture says, 'speak iniquity against God' (Ps. 75:5. LXX), or follow other forms of

wickedness. Whoever loves God far more than himself, or rather no longer loves himself but only God, no longervindicates his own honor: for his sole wish is that the divine righteousness, which has accorded him eternal honor,should alone be held in honor. This he no longer wishes in a half-hearted way, but with the force of an attitude

established in him through his deep experience of the love of God. We should know, moreover, that a personenergized by God to such love rises, at that moment, even above faith, since by reason of his great love he nowsenses consciously in his heart the One whom he previously honored by faith. The holy Apostle expresses thisclearly when he says: 'Now there are three things that endure: faith, hope, love; but the greatest of them is love' (1Cor. 13:13). For, as 1 have said, he who holds God in all the richness of love transcends at that moment his ownfaith, since he is wholly rapt in divine longing.

92. When spiritual knowledge is active within us to a limited degree, it makes us feel acute remorse if, because ofsudden irritation, we insult someone and make an enemy of him. It never stops prodding our conscience until, witha full apology, we have restored in the person we have insulted the feelings he had towards us before. Even when aworldly person becomes angry with us for no reason, this intense compunction in our conscience fills us withuneasiness and anxiety because, in some way, we have become a stumbling-block to one of those who speak after'the wisdom of this world' (1 Cor. 2:6). As a result the intellect also neglects contemplation: for spiritual knowledge,consisting wholly of love, does not allow the mind to expand and embrace the vision of the divine, unless we firstwin back to love even one who has become angry with us for no reason. If he refuses to lay aside this anger oravoids the places we ourselves frequent, then spiritual knowledge bids us visualize his person with an overflowingof compassion in our soul and so fulfill the law of love in the depths of our heart. For it is said that if we wish tohave knowledge of God we must bring our mind to look without anger even on persons who are angry with us for noreason. When we have done this, not only can our intellect devote itself to theology, but it also ascends with greatboldness to the love of God, rising unhindered from the second level to the first.

93. To those who are just beginning to long for holiness the

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path of virtue seems very rough and forbidding. It appears like this not because it really is difficult, but because ourhuman nature from the womb is accustomed to the wide roads of sensual pleasure. But those who have traveledmore than half its length find the path of virtue smooth and easy. For when a bad habit has been subjected to a goodone through the energy of grace it is destroyed along with the remembrance of mindless pleasures; and thereafter thesoul gladly journeys on all the ways of virtue. Thus, when the Lord first leads us into the path of salvation. He says:'How narrow and strait is the way leading to the kingdom and few there are who follow it' (cf Matt. 7:14); but tothose who have firmly resolved to keep His holy commandments He says: 'For My yoke is easy, and My burden islight' (Matt. 11:30). At the beginning of the struggle, therefore, the holy commandments of God must be fulfilledwith a certain forcefulness of will (cf Matt. 11:12); then the Lord, seeing our intention and labor, will grant usreadiness of will and gladness in obeying His purposes. For 'it is the Lord who makes ready the will' (Prov. 8:35.LXX), so that we always do what is right joyfully. Then shall we truly feel that 'it is God who energizes in you boththe willing and the doing of His purpose' (Phil. 2:13).

94. As wax cannot take the imprint of a seal unless it is warmed or softened thoroughly, so a man cannot receivethe seal of God's holiness unless he is tested by labors and weaknesses. That is why the Lord says to St Paul: 'Mygrace is sufficient for you: for My power comes to its fullness in your weakness'; and the Apostle himself proudlydeclares: 'Most gladly therefore will 1 rather glory in my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me'(2 Cor, 12:9). In Proverbs, too, it is written: 'For whom the Lord loves He disciplines; He chastens every son Heaccepts' (Prov. 3:12. LXX). By weaknesses the Apostle means the attacks made by the enemies of the Cross, attackswhich continually fell upon him and all the saints of that time, to prevent them from being 'unduly elated by theabundance of revelations', as he says himself (2 Cor. 12:7). Because

of their humiliation they persevered still morein the life of perfection, and when they were treated with contempt they preserved the divine gift in holiness. But by

weaknesses we now mean evil thoughts and bodily illnesses. In those times, since their bodies were submitted todeadly tortures and other afflictions, men pursuing the spiritual way were raised far above the passions which

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normally attack human nature as a result of sin. Today, however, since by the Lord's grace peace prevails in theChurch, the bodies of. those contending for holiness have to be tested by frequent illnesses, and their souls tried byevil thoughts. This is the case especially for those in whom divine knowledge is fully and consciously active, so thatthey can be stripped of all self-esteem and conceit, and can therefore, as I said, receive in their hearts the seal ofdivine beauty through their great humility. As the Psalmist says, 'We have been marked by the light of Thycountenance, 0 Lord' (Ps. 4:6. LXX). We must therefore submit to the Lord's will thankfully; for men our frequentillnesses and our fight against demonic thoughts will be counted a second martyrdom. The devil, who once said tothe holy martyrs through the mouths of lawless rulers, 'Deny Christ, choose earthly honors', is now present among usin person constantly saying the same to the servants of God. in times past he tortured the bodies of the saints,inflicting the utmost outrage upon spiritual teachers held in honor by using such people as served his diabolicschemes; and now he attacks the confessors of holiness with the various passions, and with much insult andcontempt, especially when for the glory of the Lord they give determined help to the poor and downtrodden. So weshould fulfill our inward martyrdom before God with confidence and patience, for it is written: 'I waited patientlyfor the Lord; and He heard me' (Ps. 40:1).

95. Humility is hard to acquire, and the deeper it is, the greater the struggle needed to gain it. There are twodifferent ways in which it comes to those who share in divine knowledge. In the case of one who has advancedhalfway along

the path of spiritual experience, his self-will is humbled either by bodily weakness, or by peoplegratuitously hostile to those pursuing righteousness, or by evil thoughts. But when the intellect fully and consciouslysenses the illumination of God's grace, the soul possesses a humility which is, as it were, natural. Wholly filled withdivine blessedness, it can no longer be puffed up with its own glory; for even if it carries out God's commandmentsceaselessly, it still considers itself more humble than all other souls because it shares His forbearance. The first typeof humility is usually marked by remorse and despondency, the second by joy and an enlightened reverence. Hence,as I have said, the first is found in those half-way along the spiritual path, while the second is given to those nearmgperfection. That is why

the first is often undermined by material prosperity, while the second, even if offered all the kingdoms of this world,is not elated and is proof against the arrows of sin. Being wholly spiritual, it is completely indifferent to all materialglory. We cannot acquire the second without having passed through the first; for unless God's grace begins bysoftening our will by means of the first, testing it through assaults of the passions, we cannot receive the riches ofthe second.

96. Those who love the pleasures of this present life pass from evil thoughts to actual sins. Since they lackdiscrimination, they turn almost all their sinful thoughts into wicked words or unholy deeds. Those, on the other

hand, who are trying to pursue the ascetic hfe, struggle first against external sins and then go on to struggle againstevil thoughts and malicious words. So when the demons find such people cheerfully abusing others, indulging inidle and inept talk, laughing at the wrong time, uncontrollably angry or desiring vain and empty glory, they joinforces to attack them. Using love of praise in particular as a pretext for their evil schemes, the demons slip into thesoul - as though through a window at night - and despoil it. So those who wish to live virtuously should not hankerafter praise, be involved with too many people, keep going out, or

abuse others (however much they deserve it), ortalk excessively, even if they can speak well on every subject. Too much talk radically dissipates the intellect, notonly making it lazy in spiritual work but also handing it over to the demon of listlessness, who first enervates itcompletely and then passes it on to the demons of dejection and anger. The intellect should therefore devote itselfcontinually to keeping the holy commandments and to deep mindfulness of the Lord of glory. For it is written:'Whoever keeps the commandment will know no evil thing' (Eccles. 8:5. LXX) - that is, will not be diverted to basethoughts or words.

97. When the heart feels the arrows of the demons with such burning pain that the man under attack suffers as ifthey were real arrows, then the soul hates the passions violently, for it is just beginning to be purified. It if does notsuffer greatly at the shamelessness of sin, it will not be able to rejoice fully in the blessings of righteousness. He whowishes to cleanse his heart should keep it continually aflame through practicing the remembrance of the Lord Jesus,making this his only study and his ceaseless task. Those who

desire to free themselves from their corruption ought to pray not merely from time to time but at all times: theyshould give themselves always to prayer, keeping watch over their intellect even when outside places of prayer.When someone is trying to purify gold, and allows the fire of the furnace to die down even for a moment, thematerial which he is purifying will harden again. So, too, a man who merely practices the remembrance of God fromtime to time loses through lack of continuity what he hopes to gain through his prayer. It is a mark of one who trulyloves holiness that he continually bums up what is worldly in his heart through practicing the remembrance of God,so that little by little evil is consumed in the fire of this remembrance and his soul completely recovers its naturalbrilliance with still greater glory.

98. Dispassion is not freedom from attack by the demons, for to be free from such attack we must, as the Apostlesays, 'go out of the world' (1 Cor. 5:10); but it is to remain undefeated when they do attack. Troops protected byarmor, when

attacked by adversaries with bows and arrows, hear the twang of the bow and actually see most of themissiles that are shot at them: yet they are not wounded, because of the strength of their armor. Just as they areundefeated because they are protected by iron, so we can break through the black ranks of the demons if, because ofour good works, we are protected by the armor of divine light and the helmet of salvation. For it is not only to ceasefrom evil that brings purity, but actively to destroy evil by pursuing what is good.

99. When the man of God has conquered almost all the passions, there remain two demons that still fight againsthim. The first troubles the soul by diverting it from its great love of God into a misplaced zeal, so that it does notwant any other soul to be as pleasing to God as itself. The second demon inflames the body with sexual lust. Thishappens to the body in the first place because sexual pleasure with a view to procreation is something natural and soit easily overcomes us; and in the second place it happens because God allows it. When the Lord sees an asceticmaturing in all the virtues. He sometimes allows him to be defiled by this sort of demon, so that the ascetic willregard himself as lower than those living in the world. Of course, this passion troubles men not only after theymature in the virtues, but also before that; in either case the soul is made to appear worthless, however great its

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be. We should fight the first of these demons by means of great humility and love, and the second by means of self-control, freedom from anger, and intense meditation on death, until we come to perceive unceasingly the energy ofthe Holy Spirit within us and rise with the Lord's help above even these passions.

100. Those of us who come to share in the knowledge of God will have to account for all our vain imaginings,even when they are involuntary. 'For Thou hast marked even my involuntary transgressions', as Job rightly says (Job14: 17. LXX). For if we had not ceased from the remembrance of God and neglected His holy commandments, wewould not have succumbed to either voluntary or involuntary sin. We must therefore offer to the Lord at once a strictconfession

even of our involuntary failings in the practice of our normal rule - and it is impossible for a human beingto avoid such human failings - until our conscience is assured through tears of love that we have been forgiven. 'Ifwe confess our sins. He is faithful and just, and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness' (1John 1:9). We should pay close attention to maintaining inward awareness during confession, so that our consciencewill not deceive itself into believing that the confession it has made to God is adequate: for though we may not beaware that we have done anything wrong, the judgment of God is far more severe than our conscience. This is whatPaul in his wisdom teaches us when he says: 'I do not judge myself; for although I am not conscious of anythingagainst myself, yet I am not thereby acquitted. But it is the Lord who judges me' (ICor. 4: 3-4).

If we do not confess our involuntary sins as we should, we shall discover an ill-defined fear in ourselves at thehour of our death. We who love the Lord should pray that we may be without fear at that time: for if we are afraidthen, we will not be able freely to pass by the rulers of the nether world. They will have as their advocate to pleadagainst us the fear which our soul experiences because of its own wickedness. But the soul which rejoices in the loveof God, at the hour of its departure, is lifted with the angels of peace above all the hosts of darkness. For it is givenwings by spiritual love, since it ceaselessly carries within itself the love which 'is the fulfilling of the law' (Rom.13:10). At the coming of the Lord those who have departed the present life with such confidence as this will be'caught up' together with all the saints (cf 1 Thess. 4:17);

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but those who feel fear even for an instant at the moment of their death will be left behind with the rest of mankindto be tried by the fire of judgment (cf 1 Pet. 1:7), and will receive from our God and King, Jesus Christ, the lot dueto them according to their works. For He is the God of justice and on us who love Him He bestows the blessings ofHis kingdom through all the ages. Amen.

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St John of Karpathos

(c. 7th century)O'olume 1, pp. 297-326)

Introductory Note

St Nikodimos says that he has httle information about St John of Karpathos: 'It is not known when he was active or where heunderwent his ascetic struggles.' Our knowledge today is only a little more extensive. Presumably John came from the island ofKarpathos, situated between Crete and Rhodes in the archipelago of the Sporades. It is thought that he lived there as a monk in acoenobium, and then became bishop of the island; he may be identical with a bishop John of the island 'Karpathion' who signedthe acts of the sixth Ecumenical Council (680-I), but this is hypothetical. The monks in India, to whom his two writings areaddressed, were perhaps living in Ethiopia. His primary aim is to offer encouragement to those tempted to abandon the monasticlife.

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When making a request to an earthly king, sometimes men bring with them as an offering nothing more than abunch of spring flowers; yet often, so far from rejecting their request, the king has even presented them with gifts inreturn. In the same way I, at your command, have gathered from various sources a century of spiritual texts: this ismy offering to you who are 'citizens of heaven' (Phil. 3:20). I hope that you will accept what I offer and grant me inreturn the gift of

your prayers.

1. The King of all reigns for ever, and there is neither beginning nor end to His kingdom. To those, then, whochoose to serve Him and who for His sake strive to attain holiness. He grants a reward infinitely greater than thatgiven by any earthly ruler. The honors of this present life, however splendid, come to an end when we die;

but the honors bestowed by God on those whom He regards as worthy are incorruptible and so endure for ever.

2. David in one of his Psalms describes the praise offered to God by the whole of creation (cf Ps. 104). He speaksof the angels and all the invisible powers, but he also descends to the earth and includes wild animals, cattle, birdsand reptiles. All of them, he believes, worship the Creator and sing His praise; for it is God's will that everything Hehas made should offer Him glory. How, then, can the monk, who may be compared to the gold of Ophir (cf. 1 Kgs.10:11), allow himself to be sluggish or apathetic when singing God's praise?

3. Just as the bush burned with fire but was not consumed (of. Exod. 3:2), so those who have received the gift ofdispassion are not troubled or harmed, either physicaUy or in their inteUect, by

the heat of their body, however ponderous or fevered it may be. For the voice of the Lord holds back the flames ofnature (cf. Ps. 29:7j: God's will and His word separate what by nature is united.

4. The moon as it waxes and wanes illustrates the condition of man: sometimes he does what is right, sometimeshe sins and then through repentance returns to a holy life. The intellect of one who sins is not destroyed (as some ofyou think), just as the physical size of the moon does not diminish, but only its light. Through repentance a manregains his true splendor, just as the moon after the period of waning clothes itself once more in its full light. If aman believes in

Christ, 'even though he dies, he shall live' (John 11:25); he shall know that 'I the Lord have spoken,and wiU do it' (Ezek. 17:24. LXX).

5. If you give in and are defeated when a swarm of evil thoughts rises up against you in your mind, you shouldknow that for a time you have been cut off from the grace of God, and by His just sentence abandoned to your fate.Make every effort, then, never through your own negligence to be deprived of grace, even for a single moment. Ifyou manage to avoid falling, if you succeed in leaping over the barrier formed by impassioned thoughts, and if youovercome the unclean provocations that the enemy in his ingenuity continually suggests to you, do not ignore thegift conferred on you from above. As the Apostle says, 'It was not I but the grace of God which was with me' (ICor.15:10) that won this victory, raising me above the impure thoughts that assailed me. It was His grace that 'deliveredme from the wicked man' (cf. Ps. 18:48. LXX), that is, from the devil and from the 'old man' within me (cf. Rom.6:6). Lifted by the wings of the Spirit and freed from the weight of my body, I was able to soar above the predatorydemons, who catch man's intellect with the bird-lime of sensual indulgence, tempting it in a forcible and violentmanner. It was God who brought me out from the land of Egypt, that is, from the soul-destructiveness of the world;it was God who fought on my behalf and with His unseen hand put Amalek to flight (cf Exod. 17:8-16), thus givingme cause to hope that He will also drive out the other tribes of impure passions before me. He is our God, and willgive us both 'wisdom and power' (Dan. 2:23); for some have received wisdom but not the power of the Spirit todefeat their enemies. He will 'lift up your head above your enemies' (cf. Ps. 27:6); He will

give you 'the wings of a dove', so that you can 'fly away and be at rest' with God (Ps. 55:6). The Lord will make yourarms as a 'bow of bronze' (Ps. 18:34. LXX), giving you strength and endurance against the enemy, subduing underyour feet all that rise against you (cf. Ps. 18:39). It is to the Lord, then, that you should ascribe the grace of purity,for He did not surrender you to the desires of your flesh and your blood, and to the impure spirits that trouble andcorrupt them; but

He guarded you with His own right hand. Build Him, then, an altar as Moses did after defeatingAmalek (cf. Exod. 17:15). 'Therefore will 1 give thanks to Thee, 0 Lord, and sing praises to Thy name' (Ps. 18:49),glorifying Thy mighty acts; for Thou hast 'redeemed my life from destruction' (Ps. 103:4), and snatched me from themidst of all the specious and deceptive snares and nets of evil.

6. The demons in their malice revive and rekindle the unclean passions within us, causing them to increase andmultiply. But the visitation of the divine Logos, especially when accompanied by our tears, dissolves and kills thepassions, even those that are inveterate. It gradually reduces to nothing the destructive and sinful impulses of souland body, provided we do not grow listless but cling to the Lord with prayer and with hope that is unremitting andunashamed.

7. Why does Christ accept praise from the mouths of the faithful who are 'little children in regard to evil' (1 Cor.14:20; cf. Matt. 21:16)? It is because through such praise He destroys the 'enemy and avenger' (Ps. 8:2), whotyrannizes us harshly; for the devil is an enemy of holiness and an avenger in the cause of evil. By praising the Lordwith simplicity of heart we overthrow and destroy the schemes of this enemy; for 'in the fullness of Thy glory Thouhast crushed the enemy' (Exod. 15:7).

8. If someone is figuratively speaking an abortion, misshapen by sin, it is said that half his flesh is devoured inthis life and half in the life to come (cf. Num. 12:12). For each of us will certainly experience the consequences ofhis own actions.

9. A monk should practice the virtue of fasting, avoid ensnare-ment by the passions, and at all times cultivateintense stillness.

10. In their hatred of our souls, the demons sometimes prompt others to pay us empty compliments, and thuscause us to grow slack because we are praised. If as a result we give way to conceit and self-esteem, our enemieshave no difficulty in taking us prisoner.

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11. Accept scornful criticism rather than words of praise; for a flatterer 'is no different from one who curses'(Prov. 27:14. LXX).

12. If you try to keep the rules of fasting and cannot do so because of ill health, then with contrition of heart youshould give thanks to Him who cares for all and judges all. If you always behave with humility before the Lord, youwill never show arrogance towards anyone.

13. The enemy knows that prayer is our invincible weapon against him, and so he tries to keep us from praying.He fills us with a desire for secular learning, and encourages us to spend our time on studies that we have alreadyrenounced. Let us resist his suggestions; otherwise, if we neglect our own fields and go wandering elsewhere, weshall harvest thorns and thistles instead of figs and grapes. 'For the wisdom of this world is folly in God's sight' (1

Cor. 3:19).

14. It is written: 'I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall come to all people' (Luke 2:10) - not just tosome people. Again, it is written: 'Let all the earth worship Thee and sing to Thee' (Ps. 66:4. LXX) - not just part ofthe earth. This singing is an expression not of grief but of rejoicing. Since this is so, let us not despair, but passthrough this present life cheerfully, conscious of its joys. Yet we should temper our gladness with the fear of God,keeping in mind the words: 'Rejoice in the Lord with trembling' (Ps. 2:11). Mary Magdalene and the women withher ran from Christ's tomb with both fear and great joy (cf Matt. 28:8); and perhaps we, too, shall one day come outfrom our spiritual tomb with fear and joy. 1 should be surprised if we were to do so without fear, for there is no onewithout sin, not even Moses or the Apostle Peter. But, at the time of the departure of such men from this life, God'slove proves victorious and casts out fear (cf. 1 John 4:18).

15. The Scriptures testify that if a man still under the sway of the passions believes humbly yet with all his heart,he will receive the gift of dispassion. For it is said: 'Today you shall be with Me in paradise' (Luke 23:43), and:'Your faith has saved you; go in peace' (Luke 7:50) - the peace, that is, of blessed dispassion. Other texts express thesame idea - for example: 'The grapes shall ripen at seedtime' (Amos 9:13. LXX), and: 'According to yourfaith so beit done to you' (Matt. 9: 29).

16. When we fiercely oppose the passions, the demons trouble us all the more severely with shameful thoughts.At such a time, we

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should reaffirm our faith in the Lord and set our hope steadfastly in the eternal blessings that He has promised us. Intheir jealousy our enemies wish to estrange us from these promised blessings and to deprive us of them; indeed, thevery fact that the demons bum with such envy against us shows how great these blessings are. Continuallybombarding us with unclean thoughts, the demons seek in this way to appease the frenzy within themselves, hopingto drive us to despair through these constant and unbearable attacks.

17. Some hold that the practice of the virtues constitutes the truest form of spiritual knowledge. In that case, weshould make every effort to manifest our faith and knowledge through our actions. Whoever trusts blindly toknowledge alone should call to mind the words: 'They claim to know God, but in their actions they deny Him' (Titus1:16).

18. For the most part it is at the time of Great Feasts and during the Divine Liturgy - especially when we areintending to receive Holy Communion - that the demons try to defile the ascetic with impure fantasies and the flowof semen. Yet they cannot break down the resistance of one accustomed to withstand all things firmly andcourageously. Hunchbacks should not exult over us as if they stood upright.

19. The demons try to undermine your inward resolution by buffeting your souls with an untold variety oftemptations. Yet out of these many tribulations a garland is woven for you; Christ's power 'comes to its fullness in usin our weakness' (2 Cor. 12:9). It is usually when our situation is most gloomy that the grace of the Spirit flowerswithin us. 'Light has shone in darkness for the righteous' (Ps. 112:4. LXX) - if, that is, 'we hold fast to ourconfidence and the rejoicing of our hope firmly to the end' (Heb. 3:6).

20. Nothing so readily obliterates virtue as frivolous talk and making fun of

things. On the other hand, nothing soreadily renews the decrepit soul, and enables it to approach the Lord, as fear of God, attentiveness, constantmeditation on the words of Scripture, the arming of oneself with prayer, and spiritual progress through the keeping

of vigils.

21. It is most necessary and helpful for the soul to endure with fortitude every tribulation, whether inflicted bymen or by demons. We should recognize that our sufferings are no more than we deserve, and we should neverblame anyone but ourselves. For

whoever blames others for his own tribulations has lost the power of judging correctly what is to his own advantage.

22. There are times when trials and temptations multiply and cause a man, despite his diligence, to deviate fromthe true path;

for all his wisdom and skill are swallowed up. This happens so as to prevent us from trusting in ourselves: lest Israelboast, saying. My own hand has saved me' (Judg. 7:2). But once the evil one has withdrawn from us, driven away atGod's command, we may hope to be restored to the good state that we possessed previously. Urging us to sin, theevil one encourages us to look at everything and listen to it with senses and thoughts imbued with passion. Hecoarsens our intellect, enveloping it in thick fog, and he makes our body seem an unspeakable weight and burden.Our innate intelligence, which at the outset is simple and undeveloped like a newborn child, he turns into somethingcomplex and highly experienced in every kind of sin, poisoning and distorting it through indecision and doubt.

23. When a man grows inwardly and increases in holiness, he is something great and marvelous. But just as theelephant fears the mouse, so the holy man is still afraid of sin, lest after preaching to others he himself 'should becast away' (cf 1

Cor. 9:27).

24. It is not only in the period close to the end of the world that the devil will 'speak words against the Most High'(Dan. 7:25). Even now, acting through our thoughts, he sometimes sends up to heaven monstrous blasphemiesagainst the Most High, against all He has created and against the Holy Mysteries of Christ. But, climbing the rock ofspiritual knowledge, we should not be terrified by this or astonished at the insolence of the avenger. Growing evermore fervent in our faith and prayer, we shall receive help from above and so resist the enemy.

25. When the soul leaves the body, the enemy advances to attack it, fiercely reviling it and accusing it of its sinsin a harsh and terrifying manner. But if a soul enjoys the love of God and has faith in Him, even though in the past ithas often been wounded by sin, it is not frightened by the enemy's attacks and threats. Strengthened by the Lord,winged by joy, filled with courage by the holy angels that guide it, encircled and protected by the light of faith, itanswers the malicious devil with great boldness: 'Enemy of God, fugitive from heaven, wicked slave, what have 1 todo with you'? You have no authority over me: Christ the Son of God has authority over me and

over all things. Against Him have I sinned, before Him shall I stand on trial, having His Precious Cross as a surepledge of His saving love towards me. Flee far from me, destroyer! You have nothing to do with the servants ofChrist.' When the soul says all this fearlessly, the devil turns his back, howling aloud and unable to withstand thename of Christ. Then the soul swoops down on the devil from above, attacking him like a hawk attacking a crow.After this it is brought rejoicing by the holy angels to the place appointed for it in accordance with its inward state.

26. There is a tiny fish called the remora, which is supposed to have the power to stop a large ship simply byattaching itself to the keel. In a similar manner, by God's permission a person advancing on the spiritual way issometimes hindered by a small temptation. Remember how even the great Apostle said; 'We wanted

to come to you-1, Paul - more than once, but Satan prevented us' (1 Thess. 2:18). Such a hindrance, however, should not upset you:resist firmly, with patient endurance, and you will receive God's grace.

27. When someone far advanced on the spiritual way deviates from it because of indolence, then he is attacked byall the evil 'children of the east', by 'the Amalekites and the Midianites', whose 'camels are without number' (Judg.7:12). The Midianites signify the forces of unchastity, and their numberless camels are impassioned thoughts. Thesehostile armies 'destroy all the produce of the earth' (Judg. 6:4), that is, every good action and state. So Israel - that is,the man of whom we are speaking - is brought to destitution and utter discouragement, and is compelled to call uponthe Lord. Then, because of his deep faith and humility, the man receives help from heaven, just as Gideon did. 'Myclan is the humblest in Manasseh,' said Gideon (cf Judg. 6:15) - too weak to face such a huge army; yet, against allexpectation, with a weak force of three hundred men he defeated the enemy, because God's grace was fighting onhis side.

28. You will not be able to 'tread upon the asp and cobra' (Ps. 91:13. LXX), unless in answer to your constantprayers God sends His angels to protect you. They will support you with their hands and raise you above the mire ofimpurity.

29. When someone is defeated after offering stiff resistance, he should not give up in despair; let him take heart,encouraged by the words of Isaiah: 'In spite of all your strength, you will be defeated.

wicked demons; and if you should again gather your strength together, again you will be defeated. Whatever plansyou devise, the Lord will bring them to nothing: for God is with us' (cf. Isa. 8:9-10). God 'raises up all who arebowed down' (Ps. 145:14) and produces grief and consternation among our enemies, as soon as we repent.

30. When you are being tested by trials and temptations, you cannot avoid feeling dejected. But those who till theearth of hardship and tribulation in their

hearts are afterwards filled with great joy, tears of consolation and holythoughts.

31. Isaac wanted to bless Esau, and Esau was eager to receive his father's blessing; but they failed in their purpose(cf. Gen 27). For God in His mercy blesses and anoints with the Spirit, not necessarily those whom we prefer, butthose whom He marked out for His service before creating them. Thus we should not be upset or jealous if we see

certain of our brethren, whom we regard as wretched and insignificant, making progress in holiness. You know whatthe Lord said: 'Make room for this man, so that he can sit in a higher place' (cf. Luke 14:9). I am full of admirationfor the Judge, who gives His verdict with secret wisdom: He takes one of the humblest of our brethren and sets himabove us: and though we claim priority on the basis of our asceticism and our age, God puts us last of all. For 'eachmust order his life according to what the Lord has granted him' (1 Cor. 7:17). 'If we live in the Spirit, let us alsowalk in the Spirit' (Gal. 5:25).

32. Never acquiesce when someone under obedience to you pleads: 'Give me time to resolve on such and such avirtuous action, then I will be able to achieve it.' Whoever speaks like this is clearly yielding to his own self-will andrepudiating his promise of obedience.

33. However great they may have grown, the passions of body and soul are destroyed, as you will see, by thepassing of time and at God's command. But the mercy of Christ never fails: 'the mercy of the Lord is fromeverlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him' (Ps. 103:17), continuing with them from this present age into theage to come.

34. A royal treasury is full of gold; and the intellect of a true monk is filled with spiritual knowledge.

35. There are times when a teacher falls into disgrace and undergoes trials and temptations for the spiritual benefitof others. 'For

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we are despised and weak,' says the Apostle, 'brought to disgrace by the thorn in our flesh; but you are honored andmade strong in Christ' (cf 1 Cor. 4:10; 2 Cor. 12 :7).

36. Impassioned thoughts are the source and foundation of the corruption which comes to us through the flesh.But if, after sinning, we return to watchfulness through repentance, we expel such thoughts from our soul. It is agood thing that you have been 'filled with grief, so that the wicked and unholy thought that encouraged you to sinmay be 'taken from your midst' (1 Cor. 5:2). Grief repulses the spirit of corruption.

37. To anyone among you who is oppressed by a sense of his worthlessness and inability to attain holiness, this isour message: if he attains dispassion he can see Jesus, not only in the future, but coming to him here and now 'withpower and great glory' (Matt. 24:30). Though his soul, like Sarah, has grown old in barrenness, it can still bear aholy child, contrary to all expectation; like her he can still say: 'God has made me laugh' (Gen. 21:6) - that is, Godhas granted me great joy after the many years that I have spent in sorrow, dominated by the passions; God hasshown His tender love to me, so that my youth 'is renewed like an eagle's' (Ps. 103:5). Previously I had grown old insins and shameful passions, but now I am reborn in the fresh vigor of youth; material desires and actions had mademe rough and hard, but now I am softened. God in His compassion has healed my intellect, and regaining my naturalsimplicity I can now see the things of this world clearly. My flesh, like that of Naaman the Syrian, has become as theflesh of a little child, because I have washed in the Jordan of spiritual knowledge (cf. 2 Kgs. 5:14). Now I am at onewith myself, set free by God's grace from the guile of the serpent and from the great variety of evil thoughts that I

had acquired in a manner contrary to nature.

38. Imagine that the Lord is saying to you: 'For a time I have taken away from you this or that gift of grace, inwhich you expected your inteUect to find fulfillment, and so to be at peace. To make up for this, I have given youinstead some other gift. Yet you think only about what has been taken away, not noticing what has been given you inits place; and so you feel dejected, pained and full of gloom. Nevertheless, I am glad because of this gloom which Ihave brought on you. I make you dejected for your own good. My purpose is not to destroy but to save you, since Iregard you as My son.'

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39. Suppose you have ordered yourself not to eat fish: you will find that the enemy continually makes you long toeat it. You are filled with an uncontrollable desire for the thing that is forbidden. In this way you can see howAdam's fall typifies what happens to all of us. Because he was told not to eat from a particular tree, he feltirresistibly attracted to the one thing that was forbidden him.

40. God saves one man through spiritual knowledge and another through guilelessness and simplicity. You shouldbear in mind that 'God will not reject the simple' (Job 8:20. LXX).

41. Anyone who devotes himself with special intensity to prayer is assailed by fearsome and savage temptations.

42. If you have resolved to clothe yourself in dispassion, do not be negligent, but strive to attain it with all yourstrength. 'For we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed with our house that is from heaven ... so that what is mortalin us may be swallowed up by life' (2 Cor. 5:2-4) - not only in the case of the body after the consummation of thisage, but also by anticipation here and now, spiritually. For 'death is swallowed up in victory' (1 Cor. 15:54): all thepursuing Egyptians that harass us will be swallowed up in the waves, when power is sent down upon us fromheaven.

43. Do not forget what St Paul says: 'I fear lest, after preaching to others, I myself should be cast away' (1 Cor. 9:27); 'Let anyone who thinks he stands firm take care lest he fall' (1 Cor. 10:12); 'You, who are spiritual . . . look toyourself, in case you also are tempted' (Gal. 6:1). Remember how Solomon, after receiving so much grace, turnedaside to wickedness (cf. 1 Kgs. 11:1-8); remember how St Peter unexpectedly denied his Lord. If you allow yourselfto forget all this, you will grow over-confident because of your spiritual knowledge; you will become boastful aboutyour way of life and complacent because of your many years of strict asceticism, and so will give way to pride. Donot become puffed up, my brother, but continue in fear until your last breath,

even though you should live as long asMoses. Pray in these words: 'Lord, cast me not off in the time of my old age; forsake me not when my strength fails;0 God my Savior, my praise shall be continually of Thee' (cf. Ps. 71:6, 9).

44. The Lord says to you what He said to Matthew: 'Follow Me' (Matt. 9:9). But when you follow the Lord withburning love, it may happen that on the road of life you strike your foot against the

stone of some passion and fall unexpectedly into sin; or else, finding yourself in a muddy place, you may slipinvoluntarily and fall headlong. Each time you fall and in this way injure your body, you should get up again withthe same eagerness as before, and continue to follow after your Lord until you reach Him. 'Thus have I appearedbefore Thee in the sanctuary' - the sanctuary of my thoughts - 'that I might behold Thy power and glory', for they aremy salvation. 'In Thy name will I lift up my hands', and I shall be heard; I shall think myself 'filled with marrow andfatness', and my lips will rejoice as they sing Thy praise (Ps. 63 : 2, 4, 5. LXX). It is a great thing for me to be calleda Christian, as the Lord tells me through Isaiah: 'It is no light thing for you to be called My servant' (Isa. 49:6. LXX).

45. In one place it is said that the Father 'will give good things to those that ask Him' (Matt. 7:11); elsewhere, thatHe will 'give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him' (Luke 11:13). From this we learn that those who pray to Godwith steadfast faith in these promises receive not only remission of sins but also heavenly gifts of grace. The Lordpromised these 'good things' not to the righteous but to sinners, saying: 'If you then, being evil, know how to givegood gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him?'(Luke 11:13). Ask, then, unremittingly and without doubting, however poor your efforts to gain holiness, howeverweak your strength; and you will receive great gifts, far beyond anything that you deserve.

46. How can someone with little or no faith be made to realize that an ant grows wings, a caterpillar turns into abutterfly, and many other strange and unexpected

things happen in nature, so that in this way he shakes off thesickness of unbelief and despair, himself acquires wings, and buds in spiritual knowledge like a tree? 'I am He', saysGod, 'who makes the dry tree flourish; I give life to the dry bones' (cf Ezek. 17:24; 37:1-14).

47. We should on no account wear ourselves out with anxiety over our bodily needs. With our whole soul let ustrust in God: as one of the Fathers said, 'Entrust yourself to the Lord, and all will be entrusted to you.' 'Show restraintand moderation,' writes the Apostle Peter, 'and be watchful in prayer . . . casting all your care upon God, since Hecares for you' (1 Pet. 4:7; 5:7). But if you still feel uncertainty, doubting whether He really cares about

providing for you, think of the spider and compare it with a human being. Nothing is more weak and powerless thana spider. It has no possessions, makes no journeys overseas, does not engage in litigation, does not grow angry, andamasses no savings. Its life is marked by complete gentleness, self-restraint and extreme stillness. It does not meddlein the affairs of others, but minds its own business; calmly and quietly it gets on with its own work. To those who

love idleness it says, in effect: 'If anyone refuses to work, he should have nothing to eat' (2 Thess. 3:10). The spideris far more silent than Pythagoras, whom the ancient Greeks admired more than any other philosopher because ofthe control that he exercised over his tongue. Although Pythagoras did not talk with everyone, yet he did speakoccasionally in secret with his closest friends; and often he lavished nonsensical remarks on oxen and eagles. Heabstained altogether from wine and drank only water. The spider, however, achieves more than Pythagoras: it neverutters a single word, and abstains from water as well as from wine. Living in this quiet fashion, humble and weak,never going outside or wandering about according to its fancy, always hard at work - nothing could be more lowlythan the spider. Nevertheless the Lord, 'who dwells on high but sees what is lowly' (Ps. 113: 5-6. LXX), extends Hisprovidence even to the spider, sending it food every day, and causing tiny insects to fall into its web.

48. One who is enslaved to greed may perhaps object: 'I eat a great deal, and since this involves me in heavyexpenses, I am inevitably tied up with all kinds of worldly business.' Such a person should think of the huge whalesthat feed in the Atlantic Ocean: God gives them plenty to eat and they never starve, although each of them swallowsdaily more fish than a highly populated city would consume. 'All things wait upon Thee, to give them their food atthe proper time' (Ps. 104: 27). It is God who provides food both for those who eat much and for those who eat little.Bearing this in mind, anyone among you who has a capacious appetite should in future set his faith entirely in God,freeing his intellect from all worldly distractions and anxieties. 'Be no longer faithless, but have faith' (John 20:27).

49. If we truly wish to please God and to enjoy the grace of His friendship, we should present to Him an intellectthat is stripped bare - not weighed down with anything that belongs to this

present life, with any skill or notion or argument or excuse, however highly educated we may be in the wisdom ofthis world. God turns away from those who approach Him presumptuously, puffed up with self-esteem. People whosuffer from futile conceit we rightly describe as bloated and puffed up.

50. How can we overcome the smfulness that is already firmly established within us? We must use force. A manlabors and struggles, and so by the use of force he escapes front destruction, always striving to raise his thoughts toholiness. We are not forbidden to resist force with force. If in any ascetic task we exert force, however slight, then,'remaining in Jerusalem', we can wait for the 'power from on high' which will come down upon us (cf. Luke 24:49).In other words, if we persevere in unceasing prayer and the other virtues, there will come upon us a mighty force,infinitely stronger than any we can exert. This force cannot be described in human language: in its great strength itovercomes our worst faults of character and the malice of the demons, conquering both the sinful inclinations of oursoul and the disordered impulses of our body. 'There

came a sound from heaven as of a rushing violent wind' (Acts2:2); and this force from heaven drives out the evil that is always forcing us into sin.

51. The enemy lurks like a lion in his den; he lays in our path hidden traps and snares, in the form of impure andblasphemous thoughts. But if we continue wakeful, we can lay for him traps and snares and ambuscades that are farmore effective and terrible. Prayer, the recitation of psalms and the keeping of vigils, humility, service to others and

acts of compassion, thankfulness, attentive listening to the words of Scripture - all these are a trap for the enemy, anambuscade, a pitfall, a noose, a lash and a snare.

52. When already well advanced in years, David offered thanks to God for choosing him, and he said this aboutthe final fruits of God's blessing: 'Now has Thy servant found his own heart, so as to offer this prayer' (2 Sam. 7:27.LXX). This he said to teach us that a great effort and much time are needed in prayer, before through struggle wecan reach a state in which our mind is no longer troubled, and so attain the inward heaven of the heart where Jesusdwells. As the Apostle says, 'Do you not know that Jesus Christ dwells within you?' (cf. 2 Cor. 13:5).

53. If Christ is our 'wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and

redemption' (1 Cor. 1:30), it is clear that He is also our rest. As He Himself says, 'Come to Me, all that labor and areheavy laden, and I will give you rest' (Matt. 11:28). He says also that the Sabbath - and 'sabbath' means 'rest' - wasmade for man (cf. Mark 2: 27); for only in Christ will the human race find rest.

54. Just as there is 'a cup of calamity and a goblet of wrath' (Isa. 51:17. LXX), so there is a cup of weaknesswhich, at the proper time, the Lord takes from our hands and puts into the hands of our enemies. Then it is no longerwe but the demons who grow weak and fall.

55. Outwardly men follow different occupations: there are money-changers, weavers, fowlers, soldiers, builders.Similarly, we have within us different types of thoughts: there are gamblers, poisoners, pirates, hunters, defilers,murderers, and so on. Rebutting such thoughts in prayer, the man of God should immediately shut the door againstthem - arid most of all against the defilers, lest they defile his inward sanctuary and so pollute him.

56. The Lord can be robbed and made to grant salvation, not only by speech - as in the case of the thief who criedout from the cross (cf. Luke 23 :42) - but also by thought. The woman who suffered from a hemorrhage merelythought within herself: 'If I can but touch the hem of His garment, I shall be healed' (Matt. 9:21). Another example isAbraham's servant, who spoke inwardly to God about Rebekah (cf. Gen. 24:12-28).

57. Sin itself drives us towards God, once we repent and have become aware of its burden, foul stink and lunacy.But if we refuse to repent, sin does not drive us towards God. In itself it holds us fast with bonds that we cannotbreak, making the desires which drive us to our own destruction all the more vehement and fierce.

58. Guard yourself from the witchcraft of Jezebel (cf. 2 Kgs. 9:22). Her most powerful spells are thoughts ofdelusion and vainglory. By God's grace you can overcome such thoughts, if you regard yourself as worthless anddespicable, casting yourself down before the Lord, calling upon Him to help you, and acknowledging that every giftof grace comes from heaven. For it is written: 'A man can receive nothing, unless it is given him from heaven' (John3:27).

59. The Law says about a bull which is given to goring other bulls: 'If men have protested to the owner and he hasnot destroyed

the animal, he shall pay' (Exod. 21 :36. LXX). You should apply this to your thoughts and impulses. Sometimesduring a meal the impulse of self-esteem springs up inside you, urging you to speak at the wrong moment. Thenangelic

thoughts protest within you and tell you to destroy this impulse to speak. If you do not resist the impulse bykeeping silent as you should, but allow it to come out into the open because you are puffed up by delusion, then youwill have to pay the penalty. As a punishment you will perhaps be tempted to commit some grave sin; alternatively,you may experience severe bodily pain, or be involved in violent conflict with your brethren, or else suffer tormentin the age to come. We shall have to give account for every idle and conceited word spoken by our ill-disciplinedtongue. Let us guard our tongue, then, with watchfulness.

60. The Psalm says of those who are tempted by thoughts of pleasure, anger, love of praise and the like, that thesun bums them by day and the moon by night (cf. Ps. 121:6). Pray, then, to be sheltered by the cool and refreshingcloud of God's grace, so that you may escape the scorching heat of the enemy.

61. Never form a close friendship with someone who enjoys noisy and drunken feasts, or who likes telling dirtystories, even though he may have been a monk for many years. Do not let his filth defile you. do not fall under theinfluence of people who are unclean and uncircumcised in heart.

62. Peter was first given the keys, but then he was allowed to fall into the sin of denying Christ; and so his pridewas humbled by his fall. Do not be surprised, then, if after receiving the keys of spiritual knowledge you fall intovarious evil thoughts. Glorify our Lord, for He alone is wise: through setbacks of this kind He restrains thepresumption that we tend to feel because of our advance in the knowledge of God. Trials and temptations are thereins whereby God in His providence restrains our human arrogance.

63. Often God takes away His blessings from us, just as He deprived job of his wealth: 'The Lord gave and theLord has taken away' (Job 1:21). But it is equally true that God will also remove from us the adversities He hasbrought upon us. 'Both blessings and adversities come from God' (Ecclus. 11:14); He has caused us to sufferadversities, but He will also give us eternal joy and glory. 'As 1 watched over you,' says the Lord, 'to destroy andafflict you.

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so will I build you up again and will not pull you down: I will plant you and will not uproot you' (cf. Jer. 31: 28;

24:6). Do not say:

'It's just my bad luck', for the Lord, who changed our situation for the worse, can unexpectedly alter it again for the

better.

64. If someone launches a fierce and determined attack on the demons through his self-control, prayer or anyother form of holiness, they retaliate by inflicting deeper wounds upon him. Eventually he is reduced to despair, andfeels in his soul that he has received a spiritual death-sentence. He is even brought to say: 'Who will deliver me fromthe body of this death? For I am compelled against my will to submit to the laws of my adversary' (cf. Rom. 7:23-24).

64. The demons say to themselves: 'Let us rise up, and fall upon a people that lives in hope and stillness: come, letus go and speak to them with words of spiritual deceit, seducing them from the truth over to our side' (cf. Judg.18:27; Isa. 7:6. LXX). So they sharpen the sword of temptation against us who have chosen the life of stillness, andcontinue their attacks up to the last moment of our life. The more fervent our devotion and love for God, the moresavage are their assaults; they urge us on to acts of sin, making war upon us in ways that we cannot endure, trying inthis manner to deprive us of our faith in Christ, of prayer and every hope. But for our part we shall not cease to trustin God 'until He has mercy upon us' (Ps. 123:2), and those that devour us are driven far away. We shall not cease totrust in God, until He commands our tempters to depart, and we are given new life through patience and steadfastdispassion. For 'the life of man is a time of testing' (Job 7:1. LXX). God, who watches over the contest, often allowsus for some definite period of time to be trampled underfoot by our enemies; but it is the mark of a courageous andnoble soul not to despair in adversity.

66. If a demon has such strength as to force a man, even against his will, to change from his natural state ofgoodness into a state of sin, how great must be the strength of the angel who at the appointed time is commanded byGod to restore that man's whole condition. If the icy blast of the north wind is strong enough to give to water thehardness of rock, what cannot the warmth of the

south wind achieve? If extreme cold forces everything to submit toit - for 'who can withstand His cold?' (Ps. 147: 17) - cannot heat in the

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Same way alter everything? 'Who can abide the burning heat?' (Ecclus. 43:3). So let us confidently believe that thecold, dark coals of our mind will sooner or later blaze with heat and light under the influence of the divine fire.

67. We should mention in this connection an inward state that shows the degree of dispassion attained by theJoseph hidden within each of us. Our intellect, departing from Egypt, leaves behind it the burden of the passions andthe builder's basket of shameful slavery, and it hears a language that it does not understand (cf. Ps. 81:5-6. LXX). Ithears no longer the demons' language, impure and destructive of all true understanding, but the holy language of thelight-giving angels, who convert the intellect from the non-spiritual to the spiritual - a language which illumines thesoul that hears and accepts it.

68. Once certain brethren, who were always iU and could not practice fasting, said to me: 'How is it possible forus without fasting to rid ourselves of the devil and the passions?' To such people we should say: you can destroyand banish what is evil, and the demons that suggest this evil to you, not only by abstaining from food, but bycalling with all your heart on God. For it is written: 'They cried to the Lord in their trouble and He delivered them'(Ps. 107:6); and again: 'Out of the belly of hell I cried and Thou heardest my voice . . . Thou hast brought up my lifefrom corruption' (Jonah 2:2, 6). Therefore 'until iniquity shall pass away' - that is, as long as sin still troubles me - 'Iwill cry to God most high' (Ps. 57:1-2. LXX), asking Him to bestow on me this great blessing: by His power todestroy within me the provocation to sin, blotting out the fantasies of my impassioned mind and rendering it image-free. So, if you have not yet received the gift of self-control, know that the Lord is ready to hear you if you entreatHim with prayer and hope. Understanding the Lord's will, then, do not be discouraged because of your inability topractice asceticism, but strive all the more to be delivered from the enemy through prayer and patient thanksgiving.If thoughts of

weakness and distress force you to leave the city of fasting, take refuge in another city (cf. Matt.10:23) -that is, in prayer and thanksgiving.

69. Pharaoh entreated, saying: 'May God take away from me this death' (Exod. 10: 17), and he was heard.Similarly, when the demons asked the Lord not to cast them into the abyss, their request

was granted (cf Luke 8:31). How much more, then, will a Christian be heard when he prays to be delivered fromspiritual death?

70. It may happen that for a certain time a man is illumined and refreshed by God's grace, and then this grace iswithdrawn. This makes him inwardly confused and he starts to grumble; instead of seeking through steadfast prayerto recover his assurance of salvation, he loses patience and gives up. He is like a beggar who receives alms from thepalace, and feels put out because he was not asked inside to dine with the king.

71. 'Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet have believed' (John 20:29). Blessed also are those who, whengrace is withdrawn, find no consolation in themselves, but only continuing tribulation and thick darkness, and yet donot despair; but, strengthened by faith, they endure courageously, convinced that they do indeed see Him who isinvisible.

72. The humility which in due time and by God's grace, after many struggles and tears, is given from heaven tothose who seek it is something incomparably stronger and higher than the sense of abasement felt by those who havelapsed from holiness. This higher humility is granted only to those who have attained true perfection and are nolonger under the sway of sin.

73. 'Then the devil left Him, and angels came and ministered to Him' (Matt. 4:11). It does not say that the angelswere with our Lord during the actual time when He was being tempted. In the same way, when we are beingtempted, God's angels for a time withdraw a little. Then, after the departure of those tempting

us, they come andminister to us with divine intellections, giving us support, illumination, compunction, encouragement, patient en-durance, joyfulness, and everything that saves and strengthens and renews our exhausted soul. As Nathanael wastold, 'You will see the angels ascending and descending upon the Son of man' (John 1:51); in other words, the

ministry and assistance of the angels will be given generously to mankind.

74. Keep in mind that high priest at whose right hand the devil stood, opposing all his good thoughts and wordsand actions (cf. Zech. 3:1). Then you will not be astonished at what happens to yourself.

75. A monk should understand what it means to be weak, and he should remember the words: 'Have mercy uponme, 0 Lord, for

I am weak' (Ps. 6:2). He should understand what it means to be in rebellion against God; for this is the sickness withwhich the devil and his angels are afflicted.

76. Fire makes iron impossible to touch, and likewise frequent prayer renders the intellect more forceful in itswarfare against the enemy. That is why the demons strive with all their strength to make us slothful in attentivenessto prayer, for they know that prayer is the intellect's invincible weapon against them.

77. When David went out from the city of Ziklag to fight the Amalekites, some of the men with him were soexhausted that they stayed behind at the brook Besor and took no part in the battle (cf. i Sam. 30:10). Returning afterhis victory, he heard the rest of his troops saying that no share in the spoils should be given to the men who hadstayed behind; and he saw that these themselves were ashamed and kept silent. But David recognized that they hadwanted to fight, and so in his kindness he spoke in their defense, saying that they had remained behind to guard thebaggage; and on this ground he gave them as large a share in the spoils as he gave to the others who had foughtbravely in the battle. You

should behave in the same way towards a brother who shows fervor at first, but thengrows slack. In the case of this brother and his salvation, the baggage consists of faith and repentance, humility andtears, patience, hope, long-suffering and the like. If in spite of his slackness he yet guards this baggage, waitingexpectantly for Christ's coming, he is rightly given an eternal reward.

78. We give the name of Levites and priests to those who dedicate themselves totally to God, alike through thepractice of the virtues and through contemplation. Those who do not have the strength to hunt down the passionsmay be called 'the cattle of the Levites' (Num. 3:41). They have a genuine and continuing thirst for holiness, and tryto attain it so far as they can; but they frequently fail, hamstrung by sin. Yet we may expect that at the right momentGod will grant the gift of dispassion to them as well, solely by virtue of His love; for 'the Lord has heard the desireof the poor'(Ps. 10:17. LXX).

79. We are aware of the torment that the enemy frequently inflicts upon us visibly or invisibly. But we do notperceive the torment and anguish that we inflict upon him, when we sometimes succeed in practicing the virtues,when we repent over our trans-

gressions or show long-suffering and perseverance in our difficulties, or when we pray and do other things whichpierce him to the heart, torture him and cause him bitter grief. God in His providence conceals all this from us, so asto prevent us from growmg sluggish. Be sure, however, that 'God thinks it right to repay with affliction those whoafflict you' (2 Thess. 1:6).

80. If the base of a felled tree that has grown old in earth and rock 'will bud at the scent of water . . . like a youngplant' (Job 14:9), it is also possible for us to be awakened by the power of the Holy Spirit and to flower with theincorruptibility that is ours by nature, bearing fruit like a young plant, even though we have fallen into sin.

81. Sometimes our soul grows despondent at the huge swarm of its sins and temptations, and says, 'Our hope isgone and we are lost' (Ezek. 37:11. LXX). Yet God, who does not despair of our salvation, says to us: 'You shalllive, and you shall know that I am the Lord' (Ezek. 37:6). To the soul that doubts how it can ever give birth to Christthrough great acts of holiness, these words are said: 'The Holy Spirit shall come upon you' (Luke 1:35). Where theHoly Spirit is present, do not expect any more the sequence and laws of nature and habit. The Holy Spirit whom weworship is all-powerful, and in an astonishing way He brings into existence what does not as yet exist within us. Theintellect that was previously defeated He now makes victorious: for the Paraclete who in compassion comes upon usfrom above 'is higher than all' (John 3:31), and He raises us above all natural impulses and demonic passions.

82. Struggle to preserve unimpaired the light that shines within your intellect. If passion begins to dominate youwhen you look at things, this means that the Lord has left you in darkness; He has dropped the reins with which Hewas guiding you, and the light of your eyes is gone from you (cf. Ps. 38 :10). Yet even if this happens, do notdespair or give up, but pray to God with the words of David:

'0 send out Thy light and Thy truth to me in my gloom, for Thou art the salvation of my countenance and my God'(cf. Ps. 43:3, 5); 'Thou shalt send forth Thy Spirit and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of theearth' (Ps. 104: 30. LXX).

83. Blessed is he who, with a hunger that is never satisfied, day and night throughout this present life makesprayer and the psalms

his food and drink, and strengthens himself by reading of God's glory in Scripture. Such communion will lead thesoul to ever-increasing joy in the age to come.

84. Do all in your power not to fall, for the strong athlete should not fall. But if you do fall, get up again at onceand continue the contest. Even if you fall a

thousand times because of the withdrawal of God's grace, rise up again

each time, and keep on doing so until the day of your death. For it is written, 'If a righteous man falls seven times' -that is, repeatedly throughout his life - seven times 'shall he rise again' (Prov. 24:16. LXX). So long as you hold fast,with tears and prayer, to the weapon of the monastic habit, you will be counted among those that stand upright, eventhough you fall again and again. So long as you remain a monk, you will be like a brave soldier who faces the blowsof the enemy; and God will commend you, because even when struck you refused to surrender or run away. But ifyou give up the monastic life, running away like a coward and a deserter, the enemy will strike you in the back: andyou will lose your freedom of communion with God.

85. It is more serious to lose hope than to sin. The traitor Judas was a defeatist, inexperienced in spiritual warfare;as a result he was reduced to despair by the enemy's onslaught, and he went and hanged himself. Peter, on the otherhand, was a firm rock: although brought down by a terrible fall, yet because of his experience in spiritual warfare hewas not broken by despair, but leaping up he shed bitter tears from a contrite and humiliated heart. And as soon asour enemy saw them, he recoiled as if his eyes had been burnt by searing flames, and he took to flight howling andlamenting.

86. The monk should wage a truceless war above all on these three things: gluttony, futile self-esteem, andavarice - which is a form of idolatry (cf Col. 3:5).

87. There was once a king of Israel who subdued cave-dwellers and other barbarian tribes by using the psalmsand music of David. You, too, have barbarian cave-dwellers living within you: the demons who have gainedadmittance to your senses and limbs, who torment and inflame your flesh. Because of them lust is in your eyes whenyou look at things; as you listen or use your sense of smell, passion dominates you; you indulge in dirty talk; you arefull of turmoil inwardly and outwardly, like the city of Babylon. With great faith, then, and with 'psalms and hymnsand spiritual songs'

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(Eph. 5:19), you too must destroy the cave-dwellers who work evil within you.

88. The Lord desires one man to be saved through another, and in the same way Satan strives to destroy one manthrough another. So do not spend your time with somebody who is sloppy, a mischief-maker, not guarding histongue, lest you be sent with him into punishment. It is hard enough for one who associates with a good man toattain salvation. If you do not watch yourself, but consort with people of evil character, you will be infected withtheir leprosy and destroyed. How can anyone expect pity if he recklessly approaches a poisonous snake? You shouldavoid those who cannot control their tongue, who are quarrelsome and full of agitation inwardly or outwardly.

89. If you wish to be called wise, intelligent and the friend of God, strive to present your soul to the Lord in thesame state as you received it from Him: pure, innocent, completely undefiled. Then you will be crowned in heavenand the angels will call you blessed.

90. A single good word made the thief pure and holy, despite all his previous crimes, and brought him intoparadise (cf Luke 2 3 :42-43). A single ill-advised word prevented Moses from entering the promised land (cf.

Num. 20:12). We should not suppose, then, that garrulity is only a minor disease. Lovers of slander and gossip shutthemselves out from the kingdom of heaven. A chatterbox may meet with success in this world, but he will not do soin the next. There he will trip and fall; 'evil will hunt him down and destroy him' (Ps. 140: 1 L LXX). It has beenwell said: 'Better to slip on the ground than to slip with your tongue' (Ecclus. 20:18). We should believe James theApostle when he writes: 'Let every man be swift to hear and slow to speak' (Jas. 1:19).

91. So as not to be deceived and carried away by the vain and empty things that the senses bring before us, weshould listen to the words of the prophet Isaiah: 'Come, my people, enter into your inner room' - the shrine of yourheart, which is closed to every conception derived from the sensible world, that image-free dwelling-place illuminedby dispassion and the overshadowing of God's grace; 'shut your door' - to all things visible; 'hide yourself for a briefmoment' - the whole of man's life is but a moment; 'until the Lord's anger has passed by' (Isa. 26:20. LXX); or, asthe

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Psalms put it, 'until iniquity has passed' (Ps. 57:1). This anger of the Lord and this iniquity may be caused bydemons, passions and sins;

as Isaiah says to God, 'Behold, Thou art angry, for we have sinned' (Isa. 64:5). A man escapes this anger by keepinghis attention fixed continually within his heart during prayer, and by striving to remain within his inner sanctuary.As it is written, 'Draw wisdom into your innermost self (Job 28: 18. LXX); 'all the glory of the king's daughter iswithin' (Ps. 4^: 13. LXX). Let us, then, continue to struggle until we enter the holy place of God, 'the mountain ofThine inheritance, the dwelling, 0 Lord, which Thou hast made ready, the sanctuary which Thy hands have prepared'(Exod. 1^^:17).

92. If you really wish to renounce the world, you should imitate the prophet Elisha, who in his intense andburning love for God kept nothing back for himself (cf. 1 Kgs. 19:21). You should distribute all your possessions tothose in need and so take up the Cross of Christ, hastening eagerly and willingly to die to this world; and you willreceive in exchange the eternal kingdom.

93. Once you have realized that the Amorite within you is 'as strong as an oak', you should pray fervently to theLord to dry up 'his fruit from above' - that is, your sinful actions, and 'his roots from beneath' - that is, your impurethoughts. Ask the Lord in this way to 'destroy the Amorite from before your face' (Amos 2:9. LXX).

94. You should not be surprised when those who are themselves incapable of attaining stillness ridicule thestillness that we have achieved. Apply the words of the Psalter to them - but without any feeling of rancor. Resistthem by intensifying your obedience to God, and repeat the words: 'My soul, be obedient to God' (Ps. 62:5. LXX);'In return for my love, they made false accusations against me; but I continued to pray' - for their healing as well asmyown(Ps. 109:4. LXX).

95. When there is no wind blowing at sea, there are no waves; and when no demon dwells within us, our soul andbody are not troubled by the passions.

96. If you always feel the warnith of prayer and divine grace you may apply to yourself the words of Scripture:you have 'put on the armor of light' (Rom. 13:12) and 'your garments are warm' (Job 37:17). But your enemies are'clothed with shame' (Ps. 109:29) and with the darkness of hell.

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97. When recalling your sins, do not hesitate to beat your breast. With these blows you will dig into yourhardened heart and discover within it the gold-mine of the publican (cf Luke 18:13); and this hidden wealth willbring you great joy.

98. Let the fire of your prayer, ascending upwards as you meditate on the oracles of the Spirit, bum always on thealtar of your soul.

99. If at every moment you strive to have 'your feet shod with the gospel of peace' (Eph. 6:15), you will always bebuilding up your neighbor's house as well as your own. But if you are indolent, the demons will spit invisibly inyour face and, as the Law states, you will be known as 'the man who had his sandal pulled off (cf. Deut. 25:9-10).

100. If, as St John says, 'God is love', then 'he who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him' (i John 4:16).But he who hates his neighbor, through this hatred, is separated from love. He, then, who hates his brother isseparated from God, since 'God is love, and he who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him.' To Him be gloryand power through all the ages. Amen.

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Never think that a person in the outside world - someone living contentedly with a wife and children - is moreblessed than a monk because he is able to do good

to others and to give generous alms, and seems never to betempted by demons at all. Do not suppose that you are less pleasing in God's sight than he is; do not torture yourself,imagining that you are doomed. I do not say that your life is beyond reproach simply because you persevere in themonastic state; but even if you happen to be a very great sinner, the anguish of soul and hardship that you endure aremore precious in God's sight than surpassingly great virtue on the part of someone living in the world. Your deepdejection and despondency, your tears and sighs of distress, the torments of your conscience and your doubts, yourfeelings of self-condemnation, the sorrow and lamentation of your intellect and heart, your contrition andwretchedness, your gloom and self-abasement - such experiences as these, which frequently overwhelm those cast

into the iron furnace of trials and temptations, are far more precious and acceptable to God than any good actions bya person living in the world.

Take care, then, not to fall under God's rebuke like those who said: 'What have we gained by going as suppliantsbefore the Lord, passing our time continually in his house?' (cf MaL 3:14. LXX). Obviously any slave who is nearthe master of the house receives from time to time a thrashing or a savage reprimand. But a slave who works outsideavoids punishment for the time being, because he is not part of the household and so escapes his master's notice.What have we gained, they ask, we who suffer affliction in soul and body,

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always praying and singing psalms? Do not those who neither pray nor keep vigil enjoy happiness and successthroughout their lives? Again they complain: 'Behold, the houses of others are built up, and we call others blessed';and the Prophet adds: 'And servants of God who were not ignorant said these things' (cf. Mai. 3:15-16. LXX). Yetwe should not think it strange that monks endure affliction and various forms of sorrow, patiently awaiting throughmany trials and temptations whatever their Master gives. For they have heard Him say in the Gospels: 'Truly I tellyou, that you who are near Me shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice. Yet after a little while I will visityou through the

Paraclete and drive away your despondency: I will renew you with thoughts of heavenly life andpeace and with sweet tears, of all of which you were deprived for a short time when you were being tested. I willgive you the breast of My grace, as a mother feeds her baby when it cries. When your strength fails in battle I willfortify you with power from on high, and I will sweeten you in your bitterness, as Jeremiah says in hisLamentations, speaking of the Jerusalem hidden within you. I will look upon you, and your hearts will rejoice at Mysecret visitation; your affliction will be turned to joy, and no one shall take that joy from you' (cf. John 16: 20-22).

So let us not be blind or short-sighted, regarding those in the world as more blessed than ourselves; but, knowingthe difference between true sons and bastards, let us rather embrace the apparent misery and afflictions of themonastic calling, since they lead to eternal life and to the Lord's unfading crown of glory. Let us, then, welcome thetribulations we endure as sinful ascetics (for we should not claim to be righteous). Let us choose to be 'an outcast inthe house of God' - that is, to be a monk serving Christ continually -rather than to 'dwell in the tents of sinners' (Ps.84:10. LXX) and associate ourselves with those in the world, even though they perform acts of great righteousness.

Listen, monk, to the words of your heavenly Father, who in His infinite love afflicts and oppresses you withvarious trials. 'Know this well, you pitiful monk,' He warns you, 'that as I said by My Prophet, I will be yourchastiser (cf. Hos. 5:2. LXX). I will meet you on the road in Egypt, testing you with afflictions. I will block yourevil ways with the thorns of My providence, pricking and obstructing you with unexpected misfortunes, so that youcannot

fulfill the desires of your foolish heart. I will shut up the sea of your passions with the gates of My mercy (cf Job38:8); like a wild beast I will devour you with thoughts of guilt, condemnation and remorse, as you perceive thingsof which you were ignorant. All these tribulations are a great gift of grace from God. And I will be to you not only abeast of prey but a goad, pricking you with thoughts of

compunction and with sorrow of heart. Anguish shall notdepart from your house - that is, from your soul and body - but they will both undergo the salutary harrowing of thebitter-sweet torments of God.'

But all the grim things that befall us on the ascetic way — torments, pain, confusion, shame, fear and despair -lead finally to endless joy, inexpressible delight and unutterable glory. 'For this reason have I afflicted you,' Godsays, 'that I may feed you with the manna of spiritual knowledge: I have made you go hungry, so that at the end Imay grant blessings to you and bring you into the kingdom on high.' When that time comes, lowly monks, you willskip like young calves loosed from their bonds (cf. Mai. 4:2. LXX), for you will be set free from carnal passion andthe temptations of the enemy; you will trample on the wicked demons who now trample on you: 'they shall be ashesunder the soles of your feet' (Mai. 4: 3). For if you fear God and are humble - not puffed up with vanity, notheadstrong, but in compunction and contrition regarding yourself as a 'useless servant' (cf. Luke 17:10) - then yoursinfulness, monk, is better than the righteousness of those who live in the world, and your filthiness is morecompelling than their purity.

What is it that so distresses you? No stain is intrinsic. If a man has tar on his hands, he removes it with a littlecleansing oil; how much more, then, can you be made clean with the oil of God's mercy. You find no difficulty inwashing your clothes; how much easier is it for the Lord to cleanse you from every stain, although you are bound tobe tempted every day. When you say to the Lord, 'I have sinned'. He answers: 'Your sins are forgiven you; I am Hewho wipes them out and I will remember them no more' (Matt. 9:2; Isa. 43:25); 'as far as the east is from the west,so far have I removed your sins from you; and as a father shows compassion to his sons, so will I show compassionto you' (cf. Ps. 103:12-13). Only do not rebel against Him who has called you to pray and recite psalms, but cleaveto Him throughout your life in pure and intimate

communion, reverent yet unashamed in His presence, and always full of

thanksgiving.

It is God who, by a simple act of His will, cleanses you. For what God chooses to make clean not even the greatApostle Peter can condemn or call unclean. For he is told: 'What God has cleansed, do not call unclean' (Acts10:15). For has not God in His love acquitted us? 'Who then will condemn us?' (cf. Rom. 8:33-34). When we callupon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, it is not hard for our conscience to be made pure, and then we are nodifferent from the prophets and the rest of the saints. For God's purpose is not that we should suffer from His anger,but that we should gain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us. So then, whether we are watchfulin virtue or sometimes fall asleep, as is likely to happen because of our failings, yet shall we live with Christ. As welook up to Him with cries of distress and continual lamentation, it is He Himself that we breathe. Let us therefore put

on the breastplate of faith, and take as our helmet the hope of salvation: then the arrows of dejection and despair willfind no chink through which to wound us (cf. 1 Thess. 5:8-10).

You say: 'I feel infuriated when I see that those in the world are not tempted at all' But realize this: Satan has noneed to tempt those who tempt themselves, and are continually dragged down by worldly affairs. And know this too:the prizes and crowns are given to those who are tested by temptation - not to those who care nothing about God, tothe worldly who lie on their backs and snore. 'But', you say, 'I am severely tempted by many things and my loins"are filled with mockings (Ps. 38:7. LXX): I am bowed down in my distress and there is no healing for my flesh, no"remedy for my bones"' (Prov. 3:8. LXX). Yet in fact the great Physician of the sick is here beside us. He that boreour infirmities, that healed and still heals us by His wounds (cf. Isa. 53:5): He is here beside us and even nowadministers the medicine of salvation. 'For', He says, 'I have afflicted you by My absence, but I will also heal you.So do not fear: for when My fierce anger has passed, I will heal you again. As a woman will not forget to care forthe offspring of her womb, even so will I not forget you', says the Lord (cf. Deut. 32:39: Isa. 7:4 and 49:15. LXX).'For if a bird devotes itself with tender love to its nestlings, visiting them every hour, calling to them and feedingthem, how much greater is My compassion towards My creatures!

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How much more do I in tender love devote Myself to you, visiting you when you are forgetful, speaking with you inyour intellect, feeding your reason when it opens wide its mouth like a young swallow. For as food I give you thefear of Him who is mightier than you: I give you longing for heaven and sighs that console you:

I give you compunction and song, deep knowledge and divine mysteries. If I your Lord and Father am lying whenI say these things to you, then convict Me of guilt and I will accept it.' It is in this way that the Lord always speaks tous inwardly.

I know that this letter is excessively long, but it is your request that has made it so. I have written at length inorder to strengthen those in danger of falling away through apathy. For, as you wrote to me, there are certainbrethren among you in India who find themselves more heavily oppressed by temptations than they expected; theyhave even renounced the monastic life, saying that it completely stifles a man and involves innumerable dangers.You told me that they openly regarded those in the outside world as more blessed than themselves, and cursed theday on which they took the habit. For this reason I have been compelled to write at length, using plain words, so thateven a simple and unlettered person can understand what is said. And my aim in writing all this is to show thatmonks should not consider anything worldly as superior to their own monastic vocation; for, without anycontradiction, monks are higher and more glorious than crowned monarchs, since they are called to be in constantattendance upon God. And, having written these things, I beseech you out of love to remember me continually inyour prayers, that in my wretchedness I may be given grace from the Lord, so as to close my present life in holiness.May the Father of mercies and the God of all blessings grant you a hope well founded and everlasting blessings inChrist Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory and dominion through all the ages. Amen.

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St Antony the Great

(251-356)(J'ohime 1, pp. 327-55)

Introductory Note

The piece that follows. On the Character of Men and on the Virtuous Life, is regarded by St Nikodimos as a genuinework by St Antony of Egypt (251-356) and so on chronological grounds it is placed as the opening writing in theGreek PhilokaUa. The work contains many passages of deep spiritual insight, and no doubt this is why StNikodimos included it. It is, however, almost certainly not of Christian origin, but seems to be a compilation ofextracts from various Stoic and Platonic writers of the first to fourth centuries A.D. ; there are passages which closelyreflect the views of Seneca, Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius and Sallustius. The compiler, whoever he may have been,has made some small alterations so as to eliminate non-Christian terminology, but otherwise appears to have left thematerial substantially unchanged.

St Nikodimos had some doubts about the work, since twice he expresses reservations about the language used(see his editorial notes to §§ 127 and 138), and he also found it necessary to defend the Antonian authorship of thework in his short introduction. There he argues that the work is quoted as Antony's by Peter of Damaskos; but infact, although there are eight references to Antony in Peter, none of them is to this present piece.^ It will be notedthat in the work there are no citations from Scripture. Although the Logos is sometimes mentioned (§§ 47, 156),there is nothing specifically Christian about these references. Nowhere is there any allusion to Jesus Christ, to theChurch or to the sacraments. The Trinity is mentioned once (§ 141), but this appears to be an interpolation, as thesentence plays no organic part in the argument. Probably the reference to the guardian angel in § 62 is

' See I. Hausherr, 'Un ecrit stoiciensous le nom de Saint Antoine Ennite', in De Doctrine Spirituals Christianorum Olientaliam Quaestlones etScrlpta, V (Orieataha Christiana, 86, Rome, 1933), pp. 212-16.

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likewise a Christian interpolation; all that we have in this passage is the notion, familiar in Greek pagan thought, of a'personal daemon'.

Throughout the work the doctrine of man is Stoic or Platonic rather than Christian. Nothing is said about the fallor about man's dependence on divine grace; the soul seems to need no redemption, but advances towards Godthrough its own inherent powers. The body is sharply contrasted with the soul (§§ 124, 142): it is regarded, not as atrue part of man, but as a garment to be shed (§ 81) or as an enemy to be hated (§§ 50, 117), although there is also ahint that the body may eventually be saved (§ 93). Matter is considered inherently evil (§§ 50, 89). The doctrine ofprovidence in the work is Stoic rather than Christian.

For these reasons, the Editors of the Enghsh translation do not regard the work On the Character of Men and onthe Virtuous Life as a Christian writing, and they have therefore placed it in an appendix.

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L Men are often called intelligent wrongly. Intelligent men are not those who are erudite in the sayings and booksof the wise men of old, but those who have an intelligent soul and can discriminate between good and evil. Theyavoid what is sinful and harms the souk and with deep gratitude to God they resolutely adhere by dint of practice towhat is good and benefits the soul. These men alone should truly be called intelligent.

2. The truly intelligent man pursues one sole objective: to obey and to conform to the God of all. With this singleaim in view, he disciplines his soul, and whatever he may encounter in the course of his life, he gives thanks to Godfor the compass and depth of His providential ordering of all things. For it is absurd to be grateful to doctors whogive us bitter and unpleasant medicines to cure our bodies, and yet to be ungrateful to God for what appears to us tobe harsh, not

grasping that all we encounter is for our benefit and in accordance with His providence. For knowledgeof God and faith in Him is the salvation and perfection of the soul.

3. We have received from God self-control, forbearance, restraint, fortitude, patience, and the like, which are greatand holy powers, helping us to resist the enemy's attacks. If we cultivate these powers and have them at our disposal,we do not regard anything that befalls us as painful, grievous or unbearable, realizing that it is human and can beovercome by the virtues within us. The unintelligent do not take this into account: they do not understand that allthings happen for our benefit, rightly and as they should, so that our virtues may shine and we ourselves be crownedby God.

4. You should realize that the acquisition of material things and their lavish use is only a short-lived fantasy, andthat a virtuous way

of life, conforming to God's will, surpasses all wealth. When you reflect on this and keep it in mind constantly, youwill not grumble, whine or blame anyone, but will thank God for everything, seeing that those who rely on reputeand riches are worse off than yourself. For desire, love of glory and ignorance constitute the worst passion of thesoul.

5. The intelligent man, examining himself, determines what is appropriate and profitable to him, what is proper

and beneficial to the soul, and what is foreign to it. Thus he avoids what is foreign and harmful to the soul and cutshim off from immortality.

6. The more frugal a man's life, the happier he is, for he is not troubled by a host of cares; slaves, farm-workers orherds. For when we are attached to such things and harassed by the problems they raise, we blame God. But becauseof our self-willed desire we cultivate death and remain wandering in the darkness of a life of sin, not recognizing ourtrue self.

7. One should not say that it is impossible to reach a virtuous life; but one should say that it is not easy. Nor dothose who have reached it find it easy to maintain. Those who are devout and whose intellect enjoys the love of Godparticipate in the life of virtue; the ordinary intellect, however, is worldly and vacillating, producing both good andevil thoughts, because it is changeful by nature and directed towards material things. But the intellect that enjoys thelove of God punishes the evil which arises spontaneously because of man's indolence.

8. The uneducated and foolish regard instruction as ridiculous and do not want to receive it, because it wouldshow up their uncouthness, and they want everyone to be like themselves. Likewise those who are dissipated in theirlife and habits are anxious to prove that everyone else is worse than themselves, seeking to present themselves asinnocent in comparison with all the sinners around them. The lax soul is turbid and perishes through wickedness,since it contains within itself profligacy, pride, insatiate desire, anger, impetuosity, frenzy, murderousness,querulousness, jealousy, greed, rapacity, self-pity, lying, sensual pleasure, sloth, dejection, cowardice, morbidity,hatred, censoriousness, debility, delusion, ignorance, deceit and forgetfulness of God. Through these and suchlikeevils the wretched soul is punished when it is separated from God.

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9. Those who aim to practice the life of virtue and holiness should not incur condemnation by pretending to apiety which they do not possess. But like painters and sculptors they should manifest their virtue and holinessthrough their works, and should shun al] evil pleasures as snares.

10. A wealthy man of good family, who lacks inward discipline and all virtue in his way of life, is regarded bythose with spiritual understanding as under an evil influence; likewise a man who happens to be poor or a slave, butis graced with discipline of soul and with virtue in his life, is regarded as blessed. And just as strangers traveling in aforeign country lose their way, so those who do not cultivate the life of virtue are led astray by their desires and getcompletely lost.

11. Those who can train the ignorant and inspire them with a love for instruction

and discipline should be calledmolders of men. So too should those who reform the dissolute, remodeling their life to one of virtue, conforming toGod's will. For gentleness and self-control are a blessing and a sure hope for the souls of men.

12. A man should strive to practice the life of virtue in a genuine way; for when this is achieved it is easy toacquire knowledge about God. When a man reveres God with all his heart and with faith, he receives through God'sprovidence the power to control anger and desire; for it is desire and anger which are the cause of all evils.

13. A human being is someone who possesses spiritual intelligence or is willing to be rectified. One who cannotbe rectified is inhuman. Such people must be avoided: because they live in vice, they can never attain immortality.

14. When the intelligence is truly operative, we can properly be called human beings. When it is not operative, we

differ from animals only in respect of our physical form and our speech. An intelligent man should realize that he isimmortal and should hate all shameful desires, which are the cause of death in men.

15. Every craftsman displays his skill through the material he uses: one man, for instance, displays it in timber,another in copper, another in gold and silver. Likewise we who are taught the life of holiness ought to show that weare human beings not merely by virtue of our bodily appearance, but because our souls are truly intelligent. Thetruly intelligent soul, which enjoys the love of God, knows everything in life in a direct and immediate way; itlovingly

woos God's favor, sincerely gives Him thanks, and aspires with all its strength towards Him.

16. When navigating, helmsmen use a mark in order to avoid reefs or rocks. Likewise those who aspire to the lifeof holiness must mark carefully what they

ought to do and what they ought to avoid; and, cutting off evil thoughtsfrom the soul, they must grasp that the true, divine laws exist for their profit.

17. Helmsmen and charioteers gain proficiency through practice and diligence. Likewise those who seek the lifeof holiness must take care to study and practice what conforms to God's will. For he who so wishes, and has graspedthat it is possible, can with this faith attain incorruptibility.

18. Regard as free not those whose status makes them outwardly free, but those who are free in their character andconduct. For we should not call men in authority truly free when they are wicked or dissolute, since they are slavesto worldly passions. Freedom and happiness of soul consist in genuine purity and detachment from transitory things.

19. Keep in mind that you must always be setting an example through your moral life and your actions. For thesick find and recognize good doctors, not just through their words, but through their actions.

20. Holiness and intelligence of soul are to be recognized from a man's eye, walk, voice, laugh, the way he spendshis time and the company he keeps. Everything is transformed and reflects an inner beauty. For the intellect whichenjoys the love of God is a watchful gate-keeper and bars entry to evil and defiling thoughts.

21. Examine and test your inward character; and always keep in mind that human authorities have power over thebody alone and not over the soul. Therefore, should they command you to commit murders or other foul, unjust andsoul-corrupting acts, you must not obey them, even if they torture your body. For God created the soul free andendowed with the power to choose between good and evil.

22. The intelligent soul endeavors to free itself from error, delusion, boastfulness, deceit, from jealousy, rapacityand the like, which are works of the demons and of man's evil intent. Everything is successfully achieved throughpersistent study and practice when one's desire is not impelled towards base pleasures.

23. Those who lead a life of frugality and of self-privation deliver

themselves from dangers and have no need of protection. By overcoming aU desire, they easily find the path thatleads to God.

24. Intelligent men have no need to listen to much talk, but should attend only to that which is profitable andguided by God's will. For in this way men regain life and eternal light.

25. Those who seek to lead a life of holiness, enjoying the love of God, should free themselves from presumptionand all empty and false self-esteem, and should try to correct their life and way of thinking. For an intellect thatsteadfastly enjoys the love of God is a way of ascent to Him.

26. There is no profit in studying doctrines unless the life of one's soul is acceptable and conforms to God's will.The cause of all evils is delusion, self-deception and ignorance of God.

27. Concentration on holiness of living, together with attentive-ness to the soul, lead to goodness and the love ofGod. For he who seeks God finds Him by overcoming all desires through persistence in prayer. Such a man does notfear demons.

28. Those who are deluded by worldly hopes, and know how to practice the life of holiness only in theory, arelike those who employ drugs and medical instruments without knowing how to use them or bothering to learn.Therefore, we must never blame our birth, or anyone but ourselves, for our sinful actions, because if the soulchooses to be indolent, it cannot resist temptation.

29. A man who cannot discriminate between good and evil has no right to judge who is good and who evil. Theman who knows God is good. If someone is not good, he knows nothing of God and never will; for the way to knowGod is by means of goodness.

30. Men who are good and enjoy the love of God rebuke evildoers to their face. But when evil-doers are notpresent, such people neither criticize them nor allow others to do so.

31. When talking with others all harshness should be avoided: for modesty and self-restraint adorn an intelligentperson even more than a young girl. An intellect that enjoys the love of God is a light that shines on the soul, just asthe sun shines on the body.

32. Whatever passion arises in your soul, remember that those who have correct judgment, and want to keepsecure what they have, take delight not in the ephemeral acquisition of material things, but in true and sound beliefs.It is these that make them happy. For wealth may be seized and stolen by more powerful men.

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whereas holiness of soul is the only possession which is safe and cannot be stolen, and which saves after death thosewho have it. Fantasies about wealth and other pleasures do not delude those who understand this.

33. Those who are inconstant and unmstructed should not argue with intelligent men. An intelligent man is one

who conforms to God and mostly keeps silent; when he speaks he says very little, and only what is necessary andacceptable to God.

34. Those who pursue a life of holiness, enjoying the love of God, cultivate the virtues of the soul, because thesoul is their own possession and an eternal delight. In addition, whenever possible they take pleasure in suchtransitory things as come to them through God's will and gift. Even if these things are rather scanty, they use themgladly and gratefully. Luxurious meals nourish the body; but knowledge of God, self-control, goodness,beneficence, devoutness and gentleness deify the soul.

35. Rulers who use force to make men undertake foul and soul-corrupting acts have no dominion over the soulbecause it is created with freedom of will. They may fetter the body, but not the power of decision, of which theintelligent man is the arbiter through God who created him. Because of this he is stronger than any

authority,necessity or force.

36. Those who consider it a misfortune to lose children, slaves, money or any other of their belongings, mustrealize that in the first place they should be satisfied with what is given them by God;

and then, when they have to give it back, they should be ready to do so gratefully, without any indignation at beingdeprived of it, or rather at giving it back - for since they have been enjoying the use of what was not their own, theyare now in fact returning it.

37. A good man does not sell his inner freedom for money, even if he happens to be offered a huge sum. Forthings belonging to this life are like a dream, and the fantasies of wealth are uncertain and short-lived.

38. Those who are truly men must endeavor to live with holiness and love of God, so that their holy life shinesbefore others. Since men take pains to decorate white garments with narrow purple stripes which stand out andattract attention, how much more assiduously should they cultivate the virtues of the soul.

39. Sensible people should examine carefully both their strength

and the degree of alertness of their soul's powers; in this way they should make ready to resist the passions inaccordance with the strength implanted in their nature by God. It is self-control which resists beauty and all desireharmful to the soul, it is fortitude which resists pain and want; it is forbearance which resists abuse and anger; and soon.

40. A man cannot become good and wise immediately, but only through much effort, reflection, experience, time,practice and desire for virtuous action. The man who is good and enjoys the love of God, and who truly knows Him,never ceases to do ungrudgingly all that accords with His will. Such men are rare.

41. Men of dull wits should not despair of themselves and become lazy, disdaining the life of virtue and of lovefor God as being unattainable and incomprehensible to them. They should, instead, exercise such powers as theypossess and cultivate themselves. For even if they cannot attain the highest level in respect of virtue and salvation,they may, through practice and aspiration, become either better or at least not worse, which is no small profit for thesoul.

42. Through his intelligence man is linked to that power which is ineffable and divine; and through his bodilynature he has kinship with the animals. A few men - those who are perfect and intelligent - endeavor both to root

their mind in God the Savior and to keep their kinship with Him: and this is manifest through their actions andholiness of hfe. But most men, being foolish in soul, have renounced that divine and immortal sonship, turningtowards a deadly, disastrous and short-lived kinship with the body. Concerning themselves, like animals, withmaterial things and enslaved by sensual pleasures, they separate themselves from God: and through their desiresthey drag down their soul from heaven to the abyss.

43. The man of intelligence, being deeply concerned for participation in the divine and union with it, will neverbecome engrossed with anything earthly or base, but has his intellect always turned towards the heavenly andeternal. And he knows it is God's will that man should be saved, this divine will being the cause of all that is goodand the source of the eternal blessings granted to men.

44. When you find someone arguing, and contesting what is true and self-evident, break off the dispute and giveway to such a man, since his intellect has been petrified. For just as bad water ruins good

wines, so harmful talk corrupts those who are virtuous in life and character.

45. If we make every effort to avoid death of the body, still more should it be our endeavor to avoid death of thesoul. There is no obstacle for a man who wants to

be saved other than negligence and laziness of soul.

46. Those who scorn to grasp what is profitable and salutary are considered to be ill. Those, on the other hand,who comprehend the truth but insolently enjoy dispute, have an intelligence that is dead; and their behavior hasbecome brutish. They do not know God and their soul has not been illumined.

47. God, by His Logos, created the different kinds of animals to meet the variety of our needs: some for our food,others for our service. And He created man to apprehend them and their actions and to appraise them gratefully.Man should therefore strive not to die, like the non-rational animals, without having attained some apprehension ofGod and His works.

One must know that God is omnipotent: nothing can resist Him who is omnipotent. For man's salvation, out ofnothing He created and creates by His Logos all that He wills.

48. Celestial beings are immortal because they have divine goodness within them: whereas earthly beings havebecome mortal because of the self-incurred evil within them. This evil comes to the mindless through their lazinessand ignorance of God.

49. Death, when understood by men, is deathlessness: but, when not understood by the foolish, it is death. It is notthis death that must be feared, but the loss of the soul, which is ignorance of God. This is indeed disaster for thesoul.

50. Evil is a passion found in matter, and so it is not possible for a body to come into being free from evil. Theintelligent soul, grasping this, strives to free itself from the evil burden of matter: and when it is free from thisburden, it comes to know the God of all, and keeps watch on the body as being an enemy and does not yield to it.Then the soul is crowned by God for having conquered the passions of evil and of matter.

51. When the soul has come to recognize evil it hates it like the stench of a foul beast: but he who does notrecognize evil loves it, and it holds him captive, making a slave of its lover. Then the unfortunate and wretched mancan neither see nor understand his

true interest, but imagines that this evil is an adornment, and so he is happy.

52. The pure soul, because of its innate goodness, is illumined and made resplendent by God; and then theintellect apprehends what is good and begets thoughts that accord with God's will. But when the soul is defiled byevil, and God turns away from it, or rather the soul separates itself from God, evil demons enter its thoughtprocesses and suggest unholy acts to it: adultery, murder, robbery, sacrilege and other such demonic acts.

53. Those who know God are filled with good impulses: desiring the heavenly, they despise worldly objects. Suchmen neither like nor are liked by many people. Consequently numbers of idiots not only hate but also ridicule them.And they patiently endure all that comes from their poverty, knowing that what seems to many to be bad, for them isgood. For he who comprehends the celestial believes in God, knowing that all are creatures of His will: whereas hewho does not comprehend the celestial never believes that the world is a work of God and was made for man'ssalvation.

54. Those who are full of evil and drunk with ignorance do not know God, and their soul is not watchful. God isspiritual; and though He is invisible. He is clearly manifest in visible things, as the soul is manifest in the body. Andjust as it is impossible for a body to subsist without a soul, so it is impossible for any thing that is visible and hasbeing to subsist without God.

55. Why was man created? In order that, by apprehending God's creatures, he might contemplate and glorify Himwho created them for man's sake. The intellect responsive to God's love is an invisible blessing given by God tothose whose life by its virtue commends itself to Him.

56. A man is free if he is not a slave to sensual pleasures, but through good judgment and self-restraint masters thebody and with true gratitude is satisfied with what God gives him, even though it is quite scanty. If the soul and theintellect that enjoys the love of God are in harmony, the whole body is peaceful even against its wishes;

then, should the soul so want, every bodily impulse is extinguished.

57. When men are not satisfied with what they need so as to remain alive but desire more, they enslavethemselves to passions that disturb the soul, inflicting upon it thoughts and fantasies that what they have isinadequate. And just as tunics that are too large

hinder runners in a race, so the desire for more than one needs does not aUow one's soul to struggle or to be saved.

58. Any circumstance in which a man finds himself unwillingly is a prison and a punishment for him. So becontent with whatever circumstances you may now be in, lest by being ungrateful you punish yourself unwittingly.This contentment can be achieved in but one way: through detachment from worldly things.

59. Just as God has given us sight in order that we may recognize visible things - what is white, and what black -so, too. He has given us intelligence in order that we may discern what benefits the soul. Desire, detached from theintelligence, begets sensual pleasure, and does not allow the soul to be saved or to attain union with God.

60. What takes place according to nature is not sinful: sin always involves man's deliberate choice. It is not a sinto eat; it is a sin to eat without gratitude, and not in an orderly and restrained manner such as will enable the body tobe kept alive without inducing evil thoughts. It is not a sin to use one's eyes with purity; it is a sin to look with envy,arrogance and insatiable desire. It is a sin to listen not peacefully, but angrily; it is a sin to guide the tongue, nottowards thanksgiving and prayer, but towards backbiting; it is a sin to- employ the hands, not for acts ofcompassion, but for murders and robberies. And thus every part of the body sins when by man's own choice itperforms not good but evil acts, contrary to God's will.

61. If you doubt that every act performed is observed by God, you must reflect

that although you are a man andbut dust, nonetheless you can watch and perceive many places at the same time; how much more, then, can Godobserve, since all things appear to Him as a mustard seed appears to man, and He gives life and food to all creaturesas He wills?

62. When you close the doors of your dwelling and are alone, you should know that there is present with you theangel whom God has appointed for each man; the Greeks call him the personal daemon. This angel, who is sleeplessand cannot be deceived, is always present with you; he sees all things and is not hindered by darkness. You shouldknow, too, that with him is God, who is in every place; for there is no place and nothing material in which God isnot, since He is greater than all things and holds all men in His hand.

65. If soldiers remain loyal to Caesar because he feeds them, how

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much more ought we to try ceaselessly to give thanks to God with lips that are never silent, and to praise Him whocreated all things for man's sake?

64. A virtuous way of life and gratitude towards God are fruits of man that are pleasing to God. The fruits of theearth are not brought to perfection immediately, but by time, rain and care; similarly, the fruits of men ripen throughascetic practice, study, time, perseverance, self-control and patience. And if, because of all you do, anyone shouldever think that you are a devout man, distrust yourself so long as you are in the body, and think that nothing aboutyou is pleasing to God. For you must know that it is not easy for anyone to keep himself sinless until the end.

65. Nothing is more precious to man than intelligence. Its power is such as to enable us to adore God throughintelligent speech and thanksgiving. By contrast, when we use futile or slanderous speech we condemn our soul.Now it is characteristic of an obtuse man to lay the blame for his sins on the conditions of his birth or on somethingelse, while in fact his words and actions are evil through his own free choice.

66. If we try to cure bodily passions in order to avoid the ridicule of people we chance to meet, how much more

should we try to cure the passions of the souh for when we are judged face to face by God we shall not wish to befound worthless and ridiculous. Since we have free will, although we may desire to perform evil actions, we canavoid doing so: and it is in our power to live in accordance with God's will. Moreover, no one can ever force us todo what is evil against our will. It is through this struggle against evil that we shall become worthy to serve God andlive like angels in heaven.

67. If you so wish, you are a slave of the passions: and if you so wish, you are free and do not yield to thepassions. For God created you with free will: and he who overcomes the passions of the flesh is crowned withincorruption. If there were no passions there would be no virtues, and no crowns awarded by God to those who areworthy.

68. Those who know what is good, and yet do not see what is to their benefit, are blind in soul and their power ofdiscrimination has become petrified. Hence we should pay no attention to them, lest we too become blind and so areconstrained to fall heedlessly into the same faults.

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69. We should not become angry with those who sin, even if what they do is criminal and deserves punishment.On the contrary, for the sake of justice we ought to correct and, if need be, punish them ourselves or get others to doso. But we should not become angry or excited; for anger acts only in accordance with passion, and not inaccordance with good judgment and justice. Moreover, we should not approve those who show more mercy than isproper. The wicked must be punished for the sake of what is good and just, but not as a result of the personal passionof anger.

70. To gain possession of one's soul is the only acquisition which is safe and inviolable. It is achieved through away of life that is holy and conforms to God's

will through spiritual knowledge and the practice of good actions. Bycontrast, wealth is a blind guide and a foolish counselor, and he who uses wealth in an evil and self-indulgentmanner loses his obtuse soul.

71. Men must not acquire anything superfluous or, if they possess it, must know with certainty that all things inthis life are by nature perishable, and easily plundered, lost or broken: and they must not be disheartened byanything that happens.

72. You should know that the body's sufferings belong to it by nature, inasmuch as it is corruptible and material.The disciplined soul must, therefore, gratefully show itself persevering and patient under such sufferings, and mustnot blame God for having created the body.

73. Those who compete in the Olympic games are not crowned after achieving victory over their first opponent,or their second or third, but only after they have defeated every one of their competitors. In the same way, therefore,all who wish to be crowned by God must train their souls to be disciplined in respect not only of bodily matters, butalso of love of gain, rapacity, mode of life, envy, self-esteem, abuse, death and all such things.

74. We should not pursue a godly and virtuous way of life in order to win human praise, but we should choose itfor the sake of our soul's salvation: for death is daily before our eyes, and human affairs are unpredictable.

75. We can choose to live with self-discipline, but we cannot become wealthy simply by an act of choice. Mustwe then condemn our soul by pursuing or even desiring a wealth which we cannot acquire by an act of choice, and

which in any case is but a short-[VI] 341

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hved fantasy? How foohshly we act, not reahzing that the first of all the virtues is humility, just as the first of all thepassions is gluttony and desire for worldly things,

76. Intelligent people must ceaselessly remember that by enduring slight and passing sufferings in this life, wegain the greatest joy and eternal bliss after death. Therefore, if a man falls when struggling against the passions andwishing to be crowned by God, he should not lose heart and remain fallen, despairing of himself, but should rise andbegin again the struggle to win his crown. Until his last breath he should rise whenever he has fallen: for bodily toilis a weapon used by the virtues, and brings salvation to the soul.

77. If they are worthy, ordinary people and ascetics are provided through the circumstances of their life with theopportunities to be crowned by God. Hence, during this life they must make their faculties dead to all worldlythings: for a dead man never concerns himself with anything worldly.

78. A soul engaged in spiritual training, being deifomi, must not cower with fear in the face of the passions, lest itbe derided for cowardice: since if it is disturbed by fantasies of worldly things, the soul strays from its course. Forthe virtues of the soul lead to eternal blessings, while our self-willed vices result in eternal punishments.

79. Man is attacked by his senses through the soul's passions. The bodily senses are five: sight, smell, hearing,taste and touch. Through these five senses the unhappy soul is taken captive when it succumbs to its four passions.These four passions are self-esteem, levity, anger and cowardice. When, therefore, a man through sound judgmentand reflection has shown good generalship, he controls and defeats the passions. Then he is no longer attacked buthis soul is at peace: and he is crowned by God, because he has conquered.

80. When people come to an inn, some receive beds: others, having no bed, sleep on the ground, and these toosnore just as much as those who sleep on beds. But when, after their night's stay, they leave the inn early nextmorning, all set off alike, each taking with him only what belongs to him. In the same way, all who come into thislife, both those who live modestly, and those who enjoy wealth and ostentation, leave this life like an inn: each takeswith him none of its pleasures and riches, but only his own past actions whether good or bad.

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8L If you are in a position of high authority, do not lightly threaten someone with death, knowing as you do thatby nature you, too, are subject to death and that the soul sheds the body as if shedding its last garment. Since youknow this, be gentle and merciful, always giving thanks to God. For he who has no compassion has no virtue.

82. To escape death is impossible. Knowing this, those who are truly intelligent and practiced in virtue and inspiritual thought accept death uncomplainingly, without fear or grief, recognizing that it is inevitable and deliversthem from the evils of this life.

83. We must not hate those who ignore the way of life which is good and conforms to God's will, and who pay noheed to the teachings that are true and divine. Rather, we must show mercy to them as being crippled indiscrimination and blind in heart and mind. For in accepting evil as good, they are destroyed by ignorance, and,being wretched and obtuse in soul, they do not know God.

84. Do not try to teach people at large about devoutness and right living. I say this, not because I begrudge themsuch teaching, but because I think that you will appear ridiculous to the stupid. For like delights in like: few -indeed, hardly any - listen to such instruction. It is better therefore not to speak at all about what God wills for man'ssalvation.

8y. The soul suffers with the body, but the body does not suffer with the soul. Thus, when the body is cut, the soulsuffers too: and when the body is vigorous and healthy, the soul shares its well-being. But when the soul thinks, thebody is not involved and does not think with it; for thinking is a passion or property of the soul, as also areignorance, arrogance, unbelief, greed, hatred, envy, anger, apathy, self-esteem, love of honor, contentiousness andthe perception of goodness. All these are energized through the soul.

86. When meditating on divine realities, be full of goodness, free from envy, devout, self-restrained, gentle, asgenerous as possible, kindly, peaceable, and so on. For to conform to God through such qualities, and not to judgeanyone or to say that he is wicked and has sinned, is to render the soul inviolate. One should search out one's ownfaults and scrutinize one's own way of life, to see whether it conforms to God. What concern is it of ours if anotherman is wicked?

87. He who is truly a man tries to be devout; and he is devout

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when he does not desire what is alien to him. Everything created is alien to man. He is superior to all creaturesbecause he is an image of God. A man is the image of God when he lives rightly and in a way that conforms to God.But he cannot live like this unless he detaches himself from worldly things. Now a man whose intellect enjoys thelove of God is fully aware that everything beneficial to his soul and all his devoutness come from this detachment.Such a man does not blame another for sins he himself commits. This is the sign of a soul in which salvation is atwork.

88. Those who contrive to gain possession of transitory things by force are also attached to their desire to actviciously. They ignore the death and destruction of their own soul, and do not consider what is to their interest orreflect on what men suffer after death because of wickedness.

89. Evil is a passion adherent to matter, but God is not the cause of evil. He has given men knowledge andunderstanding, the power of discriminating between good and evil, and free will. It is man's negligence and

indolence that give birth to evil passions, while God is in no way the cause. The demons, like most men, havebecome evil as a result of the free choice of their own will.

90. The man who lives devoutly does not allow evil to slip into his soul: and, no evil being present, his soul is safefrom danger and harm. Such a man is dominated neither by demon nor by fate, for God delivers him from all eviland, protected like a god, he lives unharmed. If he is praised, he laughs within himself at those who praise him: if heis execrated, he does not defend himself against those who mock him, and he never gets angry at what they say.

91. Evil clings closely to one's nature, just as verdigris to copper and dirt to the body. But the coppersmith doesnot create the verdigris, nor do parents create the

dirt. Likewise, it is not God who has created evil. He has givenman knowledge and discrimination so that he may avoid evil, knowing that it harms and punishes him. Thus whenyou see someone enjoying power and wealth, mmd you are never deluded by some demon into thinking him happy.Quickly bring death before your eyes, and you will never have a desire for any evil or worldly object.

92. Our God has granted immortality to those in heaven, but for those on earth He has created mutability, givinglife and movement to the whole of creation: and all this for man's sake. So do

not be ensnared by the worldly fantasies of the demon who insinuates evil recollections into the soul, butimmediately call to mind the blessings of heaven and say to yourself: 'If I so wish, it is in my power to win even thisstruggle against passion; but I shall not win if I am set on fulfilling my own desire.' So struggle in this way, since itcan save your soul.

93. Life is the union and conjuncture between intellect, soul and body, while death is not the destruction of theseelements so conjoined, but the dissolution of their inter-relationship: for they are all saved through and in God, evenafter this dissolution.

94. The intellect is not the soul, but a gift of God that saves the soul: and the intellect that conforms to God goeson ahead of the soul and counsels it to despise what is transitory, material and corruptible, and to turn all its desiretowards eternal, incorruptible and immaterial blessings. And the intellect teaches man while still in the body toperceive and contemplate divine and heavenly realities, and everything else as well, through itself Thus the intellectthat enjoys the love of God is the benefactor and savior of the human soul.

9j. When the soul is in the body it is at once darkened and ravaged by pain and pleasure. Pain and pleasure arelike the humours of the body. But the intellect that enjoys the love of God, counterattacking, gives pain to the bodyand saves the

soul, like a physician who cuts and cauterizes bodies.

96. There are some souls which the intelligence does not control, and the intellect does not govern, in such a wayas to check and restrain their passions - that is, pain and pleasure. These souls perish like mindless animals, since theintelligence is carried away by the passions like a charioteer who loses control over his horses.

97. The greatest sickness of the soul, its ruin and perdition, is not to know God, who created all things for manand gave him the gifts of intellect and intelligence. Winged through these gifts, man is linked to God, knowing Himand praising Him.

98. Soul is in the body, intellect is in the soul, and intelligence is in the intellect. When God is known and praised

through all these. He makes the soul immortal, granting it incorruptibility and eternal delight: for God has grantedthe gift of being to all creatures solely through His goodness.

99. God, being full of goodness and ungrudging bounty, not only

created man with free will but also endowed him with the capacity to conform to God if he so wishes. It is theabsence of wickedness in man which conforms him to God. If, then, man praises the good actions and virtues of asoul which is holy and enjoys the love of God, and if he condemns ugly and wicked deeds, how much more so doesGod, who wishes for man's salvation.

100. Whatever is good man receives from God, who is goodness itself: this is why man was created by God. Buthe attracts evils to himself out of himself and out of the wickedness, desire and obtuseness within him.

101. The unintelligent soul, though immortal and the master of the body,

becomes the body's slave throughsensual pleasure. It does not realize that what delights the body harms the soul: but, stupid and obtuse, it seeks outsuch delight.

102. God is good, man wicked. There is no evil in heaven, and no goodness on earth. Therefore the intelligentman chooses the better part and acknowledges the God of all: he thanks and praises God, and before death he hatesthe body: and he does not allow his evil senses to carry out their desires, for he knows their destructiveness and theirstrength.

103. The wicked man delights in excess while he despises justice. He takes no account of the uncertainty,inconstancy and brevity of life, nor does he reflect that death cannot be bribed and is inexorable. And if an old manis shameless and stupid, he is like rotten wood and no use for anything.

104. We savor pleasure and joy to the degree to which we taste affliction. One does not drink with pleasureunless one is thirsty, nor eat with pleasure unless hungry, nor sleep soundly unless very drowsy, nor feel joy withoutgrief beforehand. Likewise we shall not enjoy eternal blessings unless we despise transient things.

105. Intelligence is the servant of the intellect: whatever the intellect wills, the intelligence conceives andexpresses.

106. The intellect sees all things, including the celestial. Nothing darkens it except sin. To the pure intellectnothing is incomprehensible, just as for the intelligence nothing is beyond expression.

107. By virtue of his body man is mortal: and by virtue of his intellect and intelligence he is immortal. Throughsilence you come to understanding: having understood, you give expression. It is in

silence that the intellect gives birth to the intelligence; and the thankful intelligence offered to God is man'ssalvation.

108. He who says foolish things has no intellect, for he speaks without understanding. So learn what it befits youto do in order to save your soul.

109. The intelligence which is wedded to the intellect and which gives help to the soul is a gift of God. But theintelligence which is full of babbling and which investigates the measurements and distances of sky and earth, andthe size of the sun and the stars, characterizes a man who labors in vain. Fruitlessly vaunting himself, he pursueswhat is without profit, as if wishing to draw water with a sieve: for no man can resolve these matters.

110. Only the man who pursues holiness, who knows and glorifies God who created him for salvation and life,can perceive heaven and understand heavenly things. For a man who enjoys the love of God is fully aware thatnothing exists without God. God, being infinite, is everywhere and in all things.

111. As man comes naked out of his mother's womb, so the soul comes naked out of the body. One soul comesout pure and luminous; another, blemished by faults; a third, black with its many sins. Thus the soul that isintelligent and enjoys the love of God reflects and meditates on the evils that follow death, and leads a devout life inorder not to be entangled with them and so condemned. But unbelievers, fools that they are, commit impious andsinful acts, ignoring what is to come.

112. Just as when you leave the womb you no longer remember what pertains to the womb, so when you leave thebody you no longer remember what pertains to the body.

113. When you left the womb you grew in bodily strength and excellence; equally, when leaving the body, if youare pure and unblemished you will grow in strength and incorruptibility, living in heaven.

114. Just as the body has to be bom when it has completed its time in the womb, so the soul has to leave the bodywhen it has completed in the body the time assigned to it by God.

115. According to how you treat the soul while it is in the body, so will it treat you when it leaves the body. Hewho has treated his body here softly and indulgently has treated himself ill after death. For, like a fool, he hascondemned his soul.

116. Just as a body cannot grow perfectly if it leaves its mother's

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womb in a crippled state, so a soul cannot be saved or united with God if it leaves the body without attaining toknowledge of God through a virtuous way of life.

117. The body, when it is united with the soul, comes from the darkness of the womb into the light. But the soul,when it is united with the body, is bound up in the body's darkness. Therefore we must hate and discipline the bodyas an enemy that fights against the soul. For over-indulgence in foods and delicacies excites the passions of vice inmen, whereas restraint of the belly humbles these passions and saves the soul.

118. The body sees by means of the eyes, and the soul by means of the intellect. A body without eyes is blind, and

cannot see the sun shining on earth and ocean or enjoy its hght. Likewise the soul without a pure inteUect and a holyway of life is blind: it does not apprehend God, Creator and Benefactor of all, or glorify Him, and it cannot enjoyHis incorruptibility and eternal blessings.

119. Ignorance of God is obtuseness and stupidity of soul. For ignorance gives birth to evil, while fromknowledge of God comes that goodness which saves the soul. If you are anxious to cut off your desires throughwatchfulness and knowledge of God, then your intellect will be concentrated upon the virtues. But if, drunk throughignorance of God, you try to fulfill your evil desires for self-indulgence, you will perish like a beast because youdisregard the evils that will befall you after death.

120. Providence is manifested in events which occur in accordance with divine necessity - such as the daily risingand setting of the sun, and the yielding of fruits by the earth. Law, similarly, is manifested in events which occur inaccordance with human necessity. Everything has been created for man's sake.

121. Since God is good, whatever He does. He does for man's sake. But whatever man does, he does for his ownsake, both what is good and what is evil. Do not be astonished at the well-being of the wicked: you must realize thatjust as states employ executioners and, while not approving their terrible profession, use them to punish those whodeserve it, in the same way God allows the wicked to tyrannize others in the worldly sphere as a means of punishingthe impious. Afterwards He delivers the wicked also to judgment, because they have made people suffer in order toserve not God, but their own wickedness.

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122. If those who worship idols knew and understood in their hearts what they worship, they would not bebeguiled away from true reverence. Instead, seeing the beauty, order and divine providence of what God has madeand is making, they would have acknowledged Him who created all this for man.

123. Man, in so far as he is bad and unjust, is capable of killing. But God never ceases granting life even to theunworthy. Bounteous and full of goodness by nature. He willed that the world should be made and it was made. Andit is made for man and his salvation.

124. A true man is one who understands that the body is corruptible and short-lived, whereas the soul is divineand immortal and, while being God's breath, is joined to the body to be tested and deified. Now he who hasunderstood what the soul is regulates his life in a way that is just and conforms to God: not submitting to the body,but seeing God with his intellect, he contemplates noetically the eternal blessings granted to the soul by God.

125. God, being eternally good and bounteous, gave man power over good and evil. He made him the gift ofspiritual knowledge, so that, through contemplating the world and what is in it, he might come to know Him whocreated all things for man's sake. But the impious are free to choose not to know. They are free to disbelieve, tomake mistakes and to conceive ideas which are contrary to the truth. Such is the degree to which man has powerover good and evil.

126. God has ordained that the soul should be filled with intellect as the body grows, so that man may choosefrom good and evil what conforms to God. A soul which does not choose the good has no intellect. Hence, all bodieshave souls, but not every soul has intellect. An intellect enjoying the love of God is present in the self-controlled, theholy, the just, the pure, the good, the merciful and the devout. The presence of intellect helps a man towards God.

127. One thing alone is not possible for man: to be deathless.^ But it is possible for him to attain union with God,provided that he realizes that he can do so. For if he seeks God with his intellect, with faith and love and through alife of holiness, man can enter into communion with God.

' This should be understood as referring to the body and not to the soul: indeed, the body will also be rendereddeathless after the final resurrection [note by St Nikodimos].

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128. The eye perceives the visible: the intellect apprehends the invisible. The intellect that enjoys the love of Godis the light of the soul. He who has such an intellect is illumined in his heart, and sees God with his intellect.

129. No good man is immoral: but if a man is not good, he will certainly be evil and a lover of the body. The firstvirtue is to reject the demands of the flesh. If we detach ourselves from transitory, corruptible and material things -by our own free choice and not through lack of means to indulge in them - this makes us heirs of eternal andincorruptible blessings.

130. If someone possesses intellect, he knows himself and what he is; and he knows, too, that man is subject tocorruption. And he who knows himself knows all things: he knows that all things are created by God and made forman's salvation. For it lies in man's power correctly to apprehend all things and to hold correct beliefs concerningthem. Such a man knows with certainty that those who detach themselves from worldly things must endure someslight hardship in this present life, but after death they receive from God eternal blessedness and peace.

131. Just as the body is dead without the soul, so the soul without the intellect is inert and cannot receive God.

132. Only to man does God listen. Only to man does God manifest Himself. God loves man and, wherever manmay be. God too is there. Man alone is counted worthy to worship God. For man's sake God transforms Himself.

133. For man's sake God has created everything: earth and heaven and the beauty of the stars. Men cultivate theearth for themselves; but if they fail to recognize how great is God's providence, their souls lack all spiritualunderstanding.

134. Goodness is hidden, as are the things in heaven. Evil is manifest, as are earthly things. Goodness is that withwhich nothing can be compared. The man who possesses intellect always chooses what is best. Man alone, by virtueof his intellect, can attain an understanding of God and His creation.

135. The intellect manifests itself in the soul, and nature in the body. The soul is divinized through the intellect,but the nature of the body makes the soul grow slack. Nature is present in all bodies, but intellect is not present inevery soul: and so not every soul is saved.

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136. The soul is in the world because it is begotten; but the intellect transcends the world, because it isunbegotten. The soul which understands the world and wishes to be saved constantly reflects upon this as herinviolable rule: the time for combat and testing is now, and it is not possible to bribe the Judge, and a man's soulmay be either saved or lost through some small and shameful indulgence.

137. On earth God has established birth and death; and in heaven, providence and necessity. All things were madefor the sake of man and his salvation. Since

God is not Himself in need of any good thing, it was for man that Hecreated heaven, earth and the four elements, freely granting to him the enjoyment of every blessing.

138. The mortal is inferior to the immortal, yet the immortal serves the mortal: thus the four elements serve man,through the inherent goodness of God the Creator and His love for man.

139. A man whose destitution deprives him of the power to inflict harm is not therefore to be regarded as holy.But when someone has the power to inflict harm yet refrains from doing so, out of reverence for God sparing thosewho are weaker, he is greatly rewarded after death.

140. Through the love of God our Creator, there are many ways that bring men to salvation, converting their soulsand leading them up to heaven. For men's souls are rewarded for virtue and punished for sin.

141. The Son is in the Father, and the Spirit is in the Son, and the Father is in both. Through faith man knows allthe invisible and intelligible realities. Faith involves a voluntary assent of the soul.

142. Men who are forced by need or circumstance to swim across a great river emerge safely if they are sober andwatchful; and even if there are violent currents and they are briefly submerged, they save themselves by grasping thevegetation that grows on the banks. But if they happen to be drunk, then however well trained they may be asswimmers they are overcome by the wine; the current sucks them under and they lose their life. In the same way thesoul, finding herself dragged down by the currents of worldly distractions, needs to regain sobriety, awakening from

sinful materiality. She should come to know herself: that, though she is divine and immortal, yet[VI] 351

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to test her God has joined her to a body, short-lived, mortal and subject to many passions. If, drunken withignorance, indifferent to her true self, not

understanding what she is, she lets herself be dragged down by sensualpleasures, she perishes and loses her salvation. For, like the current of a river, the body often drags us down intoshameful pleasures.

143. When the soul endowed with intelligence firmly exercises her freedom of choice in the right way, and reinsin like a charioteer the mcensive and the appetitive aspects of her nature, restraining and controlling her passionateimpulses, she receives a crown of victory; and as a reward for all her labors, she is granted life in heaven by God herCreator.

144. The truly intelligent soul is not disturbed when she sees the success of the wicked and the prosperity of theworthless. Unlike the stupid, she is not deluded by the gratification enjoyed by such people in this life. For sheunderstands clearly the inconstancy of fortune, the uncertainty and brevity of life, and the unbnbability of the Judge;and she is confident that God will not fail to provide her with the nourishment she needs.

145. The life of the body, and the enjoyment of great wealth and worldly power are death to the soul. But toil,patient endurance, privation accepted with thankfulness, and the death of the body are life and eternal delight to thesoul.

146. The soul endowed with intelligence, indifferent to the material world and this swiftly-passing life, choosesthe delight of heaven and the eternal life that is conferred on her by God because of her holiness.

147. People with filthy clothes soil the coats of those who rub against them. Likewise, the immoral and wicked,when they come into contact with the simple-minded and speak to them about evil, defile such people's soulsthrough their talk.

148. The beginning of sin is desire, and this destroys our soul. The beginning of salvation and of the heavenlykingdom for the soul is love.

149. Just as copper, when it has long lain unused and idle, and has not been cared for properly, deteriorates andbecomes unserviceable and ugly with verdigris, so it is with the soul when she remains idle, neglecting holiness oflife and conversion to God. By her evil actions she deprives herself of God's protection; and just as

copper is rotted away by verdigris, so is she rotted away by the evil that idleness produces in the material body, andshe becomes ugly, unserviceable and incapable of attaining salvation.

150. God is good, dispassionate and immutable. Now someone who thinks it reasonable and true to affirm thatGod does not change, may well ask how, in that case, it is possible to speak of God as rejoicing over those who aregood and showing mercy to those who honor Him, while turning away from the wicked and being angry withsinners. To this it must be answered that God neither rejoices nor grows angry, for to rejoice and to be offended arepassions: nor is He won over by the gifts of those who honor Him, for that would mean He is swayed by pleasure. Itis not right to imagine that God feels pleasure or displeasure in a human way. He is good, and He only bestowsblessings and never does harm, remaining always the same. We men, on the other hand, if we remain good throughresembling God, are united to Him; but if we become evil through not resembling God, we are separated from Him.By living in holiness we cleave to God: but by becoming wicked we make Him our enemy. It is not that He growsangry with us in an arbitrary way, but it is our own sins that prevent God from shining within us, and expose us tothe demons who punish us. And if through prayer and acts of compassion we gain release from our sins, this doesnot mean that we have won God over and made Him change, but that through our actions and our turning to God wehave cured our wickedness and so once more have enjoyment of God's goodness. Thus to say that God turns awayfrom the wicked is like saying that the sun hides itself from the blind.

151. The truly devout soul knows the God of all. True devotion is simply to do God's will. This means to gainknowledge of God by being free from envy, self-restrained, gentle, as generous as possible, kindly, not quarrelsome,and by acquiring whatever else accords with God's will.

152. The knowledge and fear of God are a cure for material passions. As long as ignorance of God is present inthe soul, the passions remain incurable and rot the soul away: for evil in the soul is like a festering wound. God isnot responsible for this, since He has given to man spiritual understanding and knowledge.

153. God has filled man with spiritual understanding and knowledge, for He seeks to puriiy man from hispassions and deliberate

wickedness: and in His love He desires to transform the mortal into the immortal.

154. The intellect in a pure, devout soul truly sees God the unbegotten, invisible and ineffable, who is the solepurity in the pure of heart.

155. Holiness, salvation and a crown of incorruption are given to the man who bears misfortunes cheerfully andwith thankfulness. To control anger, the tongue, the belly and sensual pleasures is of the utmost benefit to the soul.

156. God's providence controls the universe. It is present everywhere. Providence is the sovereign Logos of God,imprinting form on the unformed materiality of the world, making and fashioning all things. Matter could not haveacquired an articulated structure were it not for the directing power of the Logos, who is the Image, Intellect,Wisdom and Providence of God.

157. Desire that has its origin in the mind is the source of dark passions. And when the soul is engrossed in such

desire, she forgets her own nature, that she is a breath of God; and so she is Carried away into sin, in her foUy notconsidering the evils that she wiU suffer after death.

158. Godlessness and love of praise are the worst and most incurable disease of the soul and lead to herdestruction. The desire for evil signifies a lack of what is good. Goodness consists in doing with all our heartwhatever is right and pleasing to the God of all.

159. Man alone is capable of communion with God. For to man alone among the living creatures does God speak- at night through dreams, by day through the

intellect. And He uses every means to foretell and prefigure the futureblessings that will be given to those worthy of Him.

160. For one who has faith and determination, it is not difficult to gain spiritual understanding of God. If you wishto contemplate Him, look at the providential harmony in all the things created by His Logos. All are for man's sake.

161. A man is called holy if he is pure from sin and evil. The highest attainment of man's soul and that whichmost accords with God's will is for there to be no evil in him.

162. A name designates one particular thing or person. Thus it is foolish to think that God, who is one and unique,has any other name.

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The name 'God' designates Him who has no origin, and who created all things for man's sake.

163. If you are conscious of sinful actions in yourself, cut the sinfulness out of your soul by thinking of theblessings that you hope to receive. For God is just and compassionate.

164. A man knows God and is known by Him in so far as he makes every effort not to be separated from God:and he will succeed in this if he is good in every way and refrains from all sensual pleasure, not because he lacks themeans to indulge such pleasure, but because of his own determination and self-control.

165. Do good to one who wrongs you, and God will be your friend. Never slander your enemy. Practice love,restraint and moderation, patience, self-control and the like. For this is knowledge of God: to follow Him throughhumility and other such virtues. These are the actions not of every man, but of one whose soul possesses spiritualunderstanding.

166. Because some people impiously dare to say that plants and vegetables have

a soul, I will write briefly aboutthis for the guidance of the simple. Plants have a natural life, but they do not have a soul. Man is called an intelligentanimal because he has intellect and is capable of acquiring knowledge. The other animals and the birds can makesounds because they possess breath and soul. All things that are subject to growth and decline are alive: but the factthat they live and grow does not necessarily mean that they all have souls. There are four categories of living beings.The first are immortal and have souls, such as angels. The second have intellect, soul and breath, such as men. Thethird have breath and soul, such as animals. The fourth have only life, such as plants. The life of plants is withoutsoul, breath, intellect or immortality. These four attributes, on the other hand, presuppose the possession of life.Every human soul is in continual movement.

167. When images of some sensual pleasure arise in you, watch yourself so as not to be carried away by it. Pausea little, think about death, and reflect how much better it is consciously to overcome this illusory pleasure.

168. Just as passion is present in the process of generation - for whatever comes into being in this world must

also perish - so likewise evil is present in every passion. Do not therefore say that God is powerless to extirpate evil:to say that is to talk stupid

nonsense. All these passions pertain to materiality; yet there was no need for God to extirpate matter. He has,however, extirpated evil from men for their own good, by granting them intellect, understanding, spiritualknowledge, and the power to discern what is good, so that, realizing the harm that comes from evil, they may avoidit. But the fool pursues evil and is proud of doing so: he is like someone caught in a snare, who struggles helplesslyin its toils. So he is never able to look up, and to see and know God, who has created all things that man may besaved and deified.

169. Mortal creatures know in advance that they must die, and they resent the

fact. The saintly soul is grantedimmortality because of her holiness, but mortality befalls the foolish and unhappy soul because of her sins.

170. When you go to bed with a contented mind, recall the blessings and generous providence of God; be filledwith holy thoughts and great joy. Then, while your body sleeps, your soul will keep watch; the closing of your eyeswill bring you a true vision of God; your silence will be pregnant with sanctity, and in your sleep you will continueconsciously to glorify the God of all with the full strength of your soul. For when evil is absent from man, his thank-fulness is by itself more pleasing to God than any lavish sacrifice. To Him be glory through all the ages. Amen.

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St Theodoros the Great Ascetic

(? 9"' century)(J'olume 2, pp. 13-47)

Introductory Note

The two works that follow, A Century of Spiritual Texts and Theoretikon,^ are ascribed in the Greek Philokaliato St Theodoros the Great Ascetic, a monk of the monastery of St Sabas near Jerusalem, who subsequently becamebishop of Edessa in Syria (commemorated in the church calendar on 19 July). Historically he remains a shadowyfigure, since his Life, written by Basil of Emesa, is often untrustworthy. Whereas St Nikodimos dates him to theseventh century, probably he should be placed two centuries later.

The Century may be the work of St Theodoras, but the Theoretikon almost certainly is not. Largely a freeparaphrase of Evagrios, the Century is not earlier than the seventh century, since it draws on St Maximos theConfessor's teaching concerning self-love, and not later than the beginning of the eleventh century, since it is foundin a manuscript of 1023; a ninth-century date is therefore possible. The Theoretikon, a valuable summary of thespiritual life, is hard to fix chronologically, but it is undoubtedly much later than the Century. Its style and

outlooksuggest perhaps a fourteenth-century date, but it may even be as recent as the seventeenth century, which wouldmake it one of the latest texts in the Philokalia. It is apparently incomplete, lacking both opening and conclusion.

' See J. Gouillard, 'Supercheries et m6prises litteraires. L'oeuvre de saint Theodore d'Edesse', Revue des etudes byzantines v (1947), pp. 137-57.

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St Theodoros the Great AsceticA Century of Spiritual Texts

1. Since by God's grace we have renounced Satan and his works and have sworn allegiance to Christ, both atour baptism and now again through our profession as monks, let us keep His commandments. Not only does ourdouble profession demand this of us, but it is also our natural duty, for since we were originally created by God as'very good' (Gen. 1:31), we owe it to God to be such. Although sin entered us through our negligence andintroduced into us what is contrary to nature, we have been reclaimed through God's great mercy, and renewed bythe passion of Him who is dispassionate. We have been "bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20), namely by the blood ofChrist, and liberated from the ancient ancestral sin. If, then, we become righteous, this is nothing great; but to fallfrom righteousness is pitiable and deserves condemnation.

2. Just as a good act performed without genuine faith is quite dead and ineffective, so too faith alone withoutworks of righteousness does not save us from eternal fire; for 'he who loves Me", says the Lord, 'will keep Mycommandments', (cf John 14:45, 23). If, then, we love the Lord and believe in Him, we shall exert ourselves tofulfill His commandments, so as to be granted eternal life. But how can we call ourselves faithful if we neglect tokeep His ordinances, which all creation obeys, and if, although we have been honored above all creation, we are theonly creatures who disobey the Creator and show ourselves ungrateful to our Benefactor?

3. When we keep Christ's commandments we do not benefit Him in any way,

since He is in need of nothing andis the bestower of every blessing. It is ourselves that we benefit, since we win for ourselves eternal life and theenjoyment of ineffable blessings.

4. If anyone whatsoever opposes us in the fulfillment of God's commandments, even if it is our father ormother, we ought

to regard him with hatred and loathing, lest we be told: 'He who loves father or mother or anyone else whatsoevermore than Me is not worthy of Me' (cf Matt. 10:37).

5. Let us bind ourselves with all our strength to fulfill the Lord's commandments, lest we ourselves should beheld by the unbreakable cords of our evil desires and soul-corrupting pleasures (cf. Prov, 5:22), and lest the sentencepassed on the barren fig tree should be passed on us as well; 'Cut it down, so that it does not clutter up the ground'(Luke 13:7). For, as Christ says, whatever 'does not produce good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire' (Matt.3:10).

6. He who gives himself to desires, and sensual pleasures and lives according to the world's way will quickly becaught in the nets of sin. And sin, when once committed, is like fire put to straw, a stone rolling downhill or a torrenteating away its banks. Such pleasures, then, bring complete perdition on him who embraces them.

7. So long as the soul is in a state contrary to nature, running wild with the weeds and thorns of sensualpleasures, it is a dwelling-place of grotesque beasts. Isaiah's words apply to it: ass-centaurs shall rest there, andhedgehogs make their lair in it, and there demons will consort with ass«centaurs (cf Isa. 34:11, 14. LXX) - for allthese animals signify the various shameful passions. But the soul, so long as it is joined to the flesh, can recall itselfto its natural state at any time it wishes: and whenever it does so and disciplines itself with diligent effort, living inaccordance with God's law, the wild beasts that were lurking inside it will take to flight, while the angels who guardour life will come to its aid, making the soul's return a day of rejoicing (cf. Luke 15:7). And the grace of the HolySpirit will be present in it, teaching it spiritual knowledge, so that it may be strengthened in what is good and rise tohigher levels.

8. The Fathers define prayer as a spiritual weapon. Unless we are armed with it we cannot engage in warfare,but are carried off as prisoners to the enemy's country. Nor can we acquire pure prayer unless we cleave to God withan upright heart. For it is God who gives prayer to him who prays and who teaches man spiritual knowledge.

9. It does not lie within our power to decide whether or not the passions are going to harass and attack the soul.But it does lie within

power to prevent impassioned thoughts from lingering within us and arousing the passions to action. The first ofthese conditions is not sinful, inasmuch as it is outside our control: where the second is concerned, if we fightagainst the passions and overcome them we are rewarded, but we shall be punished if because of laziness and cow-ardice we let them over-come us.

10. There are three principal passions, through which all the rest arise: love of sensual pleasure, love of riches,and love of praise. Close in their wake follow five other evil spirits, and from these five arise a great swarm ofpassions and all manner of evil. Thus he who defeats the three leaders and rulers simultaneously overcomes theother five and so subdues all the passions.

11. Memories of all the impassioned actions we have performed exert an impassioned tyranny over the soul.But when impassioned thoughts have been completely erased from our heart, so that they no longer affect it even .isprovocations, this is a sign that our former sinful acts have been forgiven. For so long as the heart is stimulated bypassion, sin clearly reigns there.

12. Bodily passions or passions concerned with material things are reduced and withered through bodilyhardship, while the unseen passions of the soul are destroyed through humility, gentleness and love.

13. Self-control together with humility withers passionate desire, love calms inflamed anger, and intense prayertogether with mmdfulness of God concentrates distracted thoughts. Thus the tripartite soul is purified. It was to thisend that the apostle said: 'Pursue peace with all men and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord" (Heb.12:14).

14. Many people wonder whether thought stimulates the passions or the passions stimulate thought. Some saythe first and some the second. My own view is that thoughts are stimulated by the passions. For unless passions werein the soul, thoughts about them would not disturb it.

15. The demons, who are always waging war against us, try to prevent us from performing actions that arewithin our power and that would help us to acquire the virtues, while at the same time they suggest ways ofaccomplishing things that in fact are impossible or else out of place. They compel those progressing in obedience tofollow the hesychasts' way of life; and they implant in hesychasts

and hermits a desire for the coenobitic rule. They use a similar method with respect to every virtue. So let us bemindful of their designs, knowing that all things are good in their proper time and measure, while things lackingmeasure and out of place are noxious.

16. With those who live in the world and are associated with the material things that feed the passions, thedemons wage war through practical activities; while with those who dwell in the wilderness, where material thingsare rare, they fight by troubling them with evil thoughts. This second mode of warfare is far more difficult to copewith; for warfare through things requires a specific time and place, and a fit occasion, whereas warfare of theintellect is mercurial and hard to control. But as our trusty weapon in this incorporeal fight we have been given pureprayer: that is why we are told to pray without ceasing (cf 1 Thess. 5:17), Prayer strengthens the intellect in thestruggle, since it can be practiced even without the body taking part.

17. With reference to the perfect mortification of the passions St Paul says: 'They that are Christ's havecrucified the flesh together with the passions and desires' (Gal. 5:24). For when we mortify the passions, utterlydestroy desires, and subjugate the will of the flesh to the Spirit, we take up the cross and follow Christ (cf Matt.16:24). For withdrawal from the world is nothing else but the mortification of the passions and the manifestation ofthe life that is hidden in Christ (cf Col. 3:3-4).

18. Those who have given up their hour-by-hour warfare, because of their

distress at the rebelliousness of 'thebody of this death' (Rom. 7:24), should blame not the flesh, but themselves. For if they had not given it the strength,providing for it so it could gratify its desires (cf. Rom. 13:14), they would not have been so greatly distressed by it.Do they not see how those who have crucified themselves together with their passions and desires, and whoproclaim the death of Jesus in their mortal flesh (cf. 2 Cor. 4:10), have made the flesh tractable and obedient to thelaw of God, so that it proves an ally rather than an adversary in their aspirations towards the divine? Let them dolikewise and they will enjoy the same peace.

19. Every assent in thought to some forbidden desire, that is, every submission to self-indulgence, is a sin for amonk. For first the thought begins to darken the intellect through the passable aspect of the soul, and then the soulsubmits to the pleasure, not

holding out in the fight. This is what is called assent, which - as has been said - is a sin. When assent persists itstimulates the passion in question. Then little by little it leads to the actual committing of the sin. This is why theprophet calls blessed those who dash the children of Babylon against the stones (cf Ps. 137: 9). People withunderstanding and discretion will know what is meant.

20. Being servants of love and peace, the angels rejoice over our repentance (cf. Luke 15:7) and our progress inholiness. Hence they try to develop spiritual contemplation within us and they cooperate with us in the achieving ofevery form of blessing. The demons, on the contrary, being producers of anger and of evil, rejoice when holinessdiminishes in us, and they attempt to seduce our souls with shameful fantasies.

21. Faith is a quality inherent in our nature. It begets in. us the fear of God. and fear of God instills that keepingof the commandments which constitutes the practice of the virtues. From such practice grows the previous flower ofdispassion. The offspring of dispassion is love, which is the fulfillment of all the commandments (cf. Rom. 13:10),bidding and holding them in unity.

22. When the body's perception is sound one is aware of what sickness afflicts it, while if one is not aware oneis a victim of obtuseness. Similarly, the intellect, as

long as it preserves its own proper energy, is conscious of itspowers and knows from where the tyrannizing passions enter it; and it makes a determined stand against them. But itis terrible to pass one's days in a state of oblivion, like one who fights by night, not being able to see the evilthoughts against which one is battling.

23. When our intelligence unyieldingly devotes itself to the contemplation of the virtues, and our desire isfocused solely on this and on Christ who bestows it, while our soul's mcensive power arms itself against thedemons, then our faculties are acting according to nature.

24. Every deifonn soul is tripartite, according to Gregory the Theologian. Virtue, then established in theintelligence, he calls discretion, understanding and wisdom: when in the incensive power, he calls it courage andpatience: and when in the faculty of desire, he calls it love, self-restraint and self-control. Justice or

right judgment penetrates all three aspects of the soul, enabling them to function in harmony. Through discretion thesoul fights against the hostile powers and defends the virtues. Through self-restraint it views things dispassionately.Through love it urges a man to love all men as himself. Through self-control it eliminates every sensual pleasure.Finally, through courage and patience it arms itself against its invisible enemies. This is the harmony of the melo-dious organ of the soul.

25. Let him who cultivates self-restraint and longs for blessed purity - which could rightly be called dispassion- discipline the flesh and bring it into subjection, with humble thoughts invoking divine grace, and he will achievethe aim he desires. But he who feeds the body intemperately will be tormented by the demon of unchastity. Just asmuch water puts out a flame, so hunger or self-control combined with humility of soul extinguishes the fever of theflesh and of shameful fantasies.

26. If you love Christ you must keep the passion of rancor far from your soul. You should on no account yieldto feelings of hostility: rancor lurking in the heart is like fire hidden in stalks of dry flax. Rather you should prayfervently for anyone who has grieved you, and you should help him, if you have the means.

By this action your soulwill be delivered from death (cf Tobit 4:10) and nothing will hinder your communion with God when you pray.

27. The Lord dwells in the souls of the humble; but shameful passions fill the hearts of the proud. Nothing sostrengthens these passions against us as arrogant thoughts, and nothing uproots the evil herbs of the soul soeffectively as blessed humility. Hence humility is rightly called the executioner of passions.

28. Let your soul be free of evil fantasies and illumined with thoughts of what is truly noble. Constantlyremember the saying, 'A self-indulgent heart becomes a prison and a chain for the soul when it leaves this life;whereas an assiduous heart is an open door.' Truly, when pure souls leave the body they are guided by angels wholead them to the life of blessedness. But unclean and unrepentant souls will be taken in charge by the demons.

29. Beautiful is a head adorned with a precious diadem, set with Indian stones and lustrous pearls. Butincomparably more beautiful

is a soul rich in Acknowledge of God, illumined by the most lucid contemplation and having the Holy Spiritdwelling within it. Who can adequately describe the beauty of that blessed soul?

30. Do not let anger and wrath make their home in you: for 'an angry man is not dignified' (Prov. 11:25. LXX),whereas wisdom dwells in the hearts of the gentle. If the passion of anger dominates your soul, those who live in theworld will prove to be better than you, and you will be put to shame as unworthy of monastic solitude.

31. In every trial and in all warfare use prayer as your invincible weapon, and by the grace of Christ you willbe victorious. Let your prayer be pure, as our wise teacher counsels. For he says: 'I would have men prayeverywhere, lifting up holy hands, without anger and without quarrelling" (1 Tim. 2:8). But the person who neglectssuch prayer will be delivered over to trials and passions.

32. "Wine makes glad the heart of man' (Ps. 104:15^. But you who have professed sorrow and grief should turnaway from such gladness and rejoice in

spiritual gifts. If you rejoice in wine, you will live with shameful thoughtsand distress will overwhelm you.

33. Do not plan to spend feast-days in drinking wine, but in regenerating your intellect and purifying your soul.If you eat gluttonously and drink wine you will provoke anger in the person whom the feast is honoring.

34. We have been instructed to keep vigil - with prayers, readings, and the recitation of the Psalter - at alltimes, and especially at feasts. A monk who keeps vigil refines his mind for contemplation, whereas much! sleepcoarsens the intellect. But take care that during vigils you do not pass the time in empty gossip or evil thoughts. It isbetter to be asleep than to keep vigil with vain words and thoughts.

35. He who keeps a serpent in his breast and he who keeps an evil thought in his heart will both be killed, theone by being bitten in the body by venomous fangs and the other by injecting a lethal poison into his soul. Let us,then, speedily slay the 'offspring of vipers' (Matt. 3:7), and let us not bring forth evil thoughts from our heart, lestwe suffer bitter pangs.

36. A pure soul can truly be called a 'chosen vessel" (Acts 9:15), 'an enclosed garden', 'a sealed fountain'(Song of Solomon 4:12), and 'a throne of perceptiveness' (Prov. 12:23. LXX). But a soul polluted with filthyimpurities stinks like a sewer.

37. I have heard from elders experienced m the practice of the virtues that evil thoughts are engendered m thesoul by showy clothes, the belly's repletion and bad company.

38. Desire for material wealth must not lodge in the souls of those pursuing the spiritual way. For a monk withmany possessions is an over-laden ship, driven by the storm of cares and sinking in the deep waters of distress. Loveof riches begets many passions, and has aptly been called "the root of all evil" (1 Tim. 6:10).

39. A condition of total poverty, combined with silence, is a treasure hidden in

the field of the monastic life (cf.Matt. 13:44). So "go and sell all you have and give to the poor' (Matt. 19:21), and acquire this field. And when youhave" dug up the treasure, keep it inviolate, so that you may become rich with a wealth that is inexhaustible.

40. When you have taken up your dwelling with a spiritual father and find that he helps you, let no. oneseparate you from his love and from living with him. Do not judge him in any respect, do not revile him even thoughhe censures or strikes you, do not listen to someone who slanders him to you, do not side with anyone who criticizeshim, lest the Lord should be angered with you and blot you out of the book of the living (cf. Exod. 32:33).

41. The struggle to achieve obedience is won by means of renunciation, as we have learned. He who seeks tobe obedient must arm himself with three weapons: faith, hope, and divine and holy love (cf. 1 Cor. 13:13). Thusdefended, he will 'fight the good fight' and receive 'a crown of righteousness' (2 Tim. 4:7-8).

42. Do not judge the actions of your spiritual father, but obey his commands. For the demons are in the habit ofshowing you his defects, so that your ears may be deaf to what he tells you. They aim either to drive you from thearena as a feeble and cowardly fighter, or simply to terrify you with thoughts that undermine your faith, and so tomake you sluggish about every form of virtue.

43. A monk who disobeys the commands of his spiritual father transgresses the special vows of his profession.But he who has embraced obedience and slain his own will with the sword of humility has indeed fulfilled feepromise that he made to Christ in the presence of many witnesses.

44. From our own observations we have clearly perceived that the enemies of our life, the demons, areexceedingly jealous of those

pursuing the ascetic way under obedience to a spiritual father. Gnashing their teeth at them and devising all sorts ofschemes, they do and suggest everything possible so as to separate a monk from his spiritual father's care. Theypropose plausible excuses, they contrive irritations, they arouse hatred against the father, they represent his

admonitions as rebukes, they make his words of correction seem like sharpened arrows. Why, they ask, since youare free, have you become a slave - a slave to a merciless master? How long will you wear yourself out under theyoke of servitude and not see the light of freedom? Then they make suggestions about giving hospitality, visiting thesick and caring for the poor. Next they extol above measure the rewards of extreme stillness and solitude, and sowall sorts of evil weeds in the heart of the devout warrior, simply to cast him out of the fold of his spiritual father, andhaving unmoored him from that untroubled haven they drive him out to sea, into the fierce and soul-destroyingtempest. Finally, when they have enslaved him to their own authority, they use him according to their own evildesires.

45. You who are under obedience to a spiritual father must be alert to the cunning of your enemies andadversaries. Do not forget your profession and promise to God: do not be defeated by insults: do not be afraid ofreproof, mockery or sneering: do not give way to the proliferation of evil thoughts; do not evade your father'sstrictures: do not dishonor the blessed yoke of humility by daring to be self-satisfied and presumptuous. Instead,rooting in your heart the Lord's words, "He who endures to the end will be saved" (Matt. 10:22), patiently run therace that is set before you, "looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith' (Heb. 12:1-2).

46. The goldsmith purifies gold by smelting it in a furnace. And a novice must surrender himself to the strugglefor obedience and to the fiery ordeals of a holy life, learning with toil and much patience the practice of obedience.And once his old manners and habits have been melted down and he learns true humility, he becomes radiant, fit forheavenly treasures, for a life of immortality and a blessed repose whence 'pain and sorrow have fled away' (Isa.35:10. LXX), and where gladness and continual joy flourish.

47. True inward faith begets fear of God. Fear of God teaches us to keep the commandments. For where thereis fear, it is said, there the commandments are kept. The keeping of the commandments

establishes practical virtue, the precursor of contemplative virtue. Of these the

fruit is dispassion. Throughdispassion, love is bom m us. Concerning love the beloved disciple said, 'God is love, and he who dwells in lovedwells in God, and God in him' (1 John 4:16).

48. The monk's way of life is truly full of beauty and excellence, provided it accords with the rules and lawslaid down by its founders and directors, taught as they were by the Holy Spirit. The warrior of Christ must be abovematerial things and detached from all worldly thoughts and deeds; for, as St Paul says: 'In order to please the leaderwho has chosen him, the soldier going to war does not entangle himself in the affairs of this life' (2 Tim. 1:4).

49. The monk, therefore, must be detached from material things, must be dispassionate, free from all evildesires, not given to soft living, not a tippler, not slothful, not indolent, not a lover of wealth, pleasure or praise.Unless he raises himself above all these things, he will fail to achieve the angelic way of life. For those who do

achieve it, the yoke is easy and the burden is hght (cf Matt. 11:30), divine hope sustaining them in all things. Thislife and its activities are full of delight, and the lot of the soul that has attained it is blessed and "cannot be takenaway' (Luke 10:42).

50. If you have renounced worldly cares and undertaken the ascetic struggle you should not desire to havewealth for distribution to the poor. For this is another trick of the devil who arouses self-esteem in you so as to fillyour intellect with worry and restlessness. Even if you have only bread or water, with these you can still meet thedues of hospitality. Even if you do not have these, but simply make the stranger welcome and offer him a word ofencouragement, you will not be failing in hospitality. Think of the widow mentioned in the Gospel by our Lord: withtwo mites she surpassed the generous gifts of the wealthy (cf. .Mark 12:42-44).

51. These things apply to monks pursuing the life of stillness. But those under obedience to a spiritual fathershould have only one thought in mind - to depart in nothing from his commands. For if they achieve this, theyachieve everything. But if they depart from such Strict obedience they will fail completely m the spiritual life and inevery form of virtue.

52. Since you are a friend of Christ, let me give you this further piece of advice.

You must aspire to live inexile, free from the conditions and ways of your own country. Do not be caught up by

anxiety for your parents or by ties of affection to your relatives. Do not stay in a town but persevere in thewilderness, saying like the prophet: 'Lo, then would I wander far off, and remain in the wilderness' (Ps. 55:7 LXX).

53. Seek out places which are secluded and far from the world. And even if there is a scarcity of essentials inthe place you choose, do not be afraid. If your enemies should encircle you like bees (cf. Ps. 118:12) or perniciousdrones, assaulting you and disturbing you with all kinds of thoughts, do not be scared, do not listen to them, do notwithdraw from the struggle. Rather, endure patiently, always saying to yourself: 'I waited patiently for the Lord; andHe heard me, and listened to my supplication' (Ps. 40:1. LXX). And then you will see the great things God does. Hishelp. His care and all His forethought for your salvation.

54. If you are a friend of Christ you should have as friends persons who are of benefit to you and contribute toyour way of life. Let your friends be men of peace, spiritual brethren, holy fathers. It is of such that our Lord wasspeaking when He said: 'My mother and brethren are those who do the will of My Father who is in heaven' (cf.Matt. 12:49-50).

55. Do not hanker after varied and costly foods or lethal pleasures. For 'she that indulges in pleasure", it is said,'is dead while still alive" (1 Tim. 5: 6). Even with ordinary foods, avoid satiety as far as possible. For it is written;'Do not be deceived by the filling of the belly' (Prov. 24:15. LXX).

56. You must avoid continually wasting time outside your cell, if you have indeed chosen to practice stillness.

For it is most harmful, depriving you of grace, darkening your mind and sapping your aspiration. This is why it issaid: "Restlessness of desire perverts the guileless intellect' (Wisd. 4:12). So restrict your relationships with otherpeople, lest your intellect should become distracted and your life of stillness disrupted.

57. When sitting in your cell, do not act in a mindless and lazy manner. 'To

journey without direction', it issaid, 'is wasted effort.' Instead, work purposefully, concentrate your intellect and always keep before your eyes thelast hour before your death. Recall the vanity of the world, how deceptive it is, how sickly and

worthless; reflect on the dreadful reckoning that is to come, how the harsh keepers of the toll homes will bringbefore as one by one the actions, words and thoughts which they suggested but which we accepted and made ourown. Recall the chastisements in hell, and the state of the souls imprisoned there. Recall, too, that great and fearfulday, the day of the general resurrection, when we are brought before God, and the final sentence of the infallibleJudge. Bring to mind the punishment that befalls sinners, the reproach, the reprobation of the conscience, how theywill be rejected by God and cast into the age-long fire, to the worm that does not die, to the impenetrable darknesswhere there is weeping and gnashing of teeth (cf Mark 9:44, Matt. 8:12). Meditate on all the other chastisements,and let your tears continually drench your cheeks, your clothes, the place where you are sitting. I have known manymen in whom such thoughts have produced an abundance of tears, and who in this way have wonderfully cleansedall the powers of their soul.

58. But think also of the blessings which await the righteous: how they will stand at Christ's right hand, thegracious voice of the Master, the inheritance of the heavenly kingdom, the gift which is beyond the intellect's grasp,that sweet light, the endless joy, never interrupted by grief, those heavenly mansions, life with the angels, and all theother promises made to those who fear the Lord.

59. Let these thoughts dwell with you, sleep with you, arise with you. See that you never forget them but,wherever you are, keep them in mind, so that evil thoughts may depart and you may be filled with divine solace.Unless a soul is strengthened with these thoughts it cannot achieve stillness. For a spring which has no water doesnot deserve its name.

60. This is the way of life ordained for those who live in still-.ness: fasting to the limit of one's strength, vigils,sleeping on the ground, and every other form of hardship for the sake of future repose. For, says St Paul, 'thesufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be

revealed in us' (Rom.8:18). Especially important is pure prayer - prayer which is unceasing and uninterrupted. Such prayer is a safefortress, a sheltered harbor, a protector of virtues, a destroyer of passions. It brings vigor to the soul, purifies theintellect, gives rest to those who suffer, consoles those who mourn. Prayer is converse with God, contemplation ofthe invisible, the angelic mode of life, a stimulus

towards the divine, the assurance of things longed for, "making real the things for which we hope' (Heb. 11:1). Asan ascetic you must embrace this queen of the virtues with all your strength. Pray day and night. Pray at times ofrejection and at times of exhilaration. Pray with fear and trembling, with a watchful and vigilant mind, so that yourprayer may be accepted by the Lord. For, as the psalmist says: "The eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and Hisears are open to their prayer' (Ps. 34:15).

61. It has been said aptly and appositely by one of the ancients that, among the demons opposing us, there arethree groups that fight in the front line: those entrusted with the appetites of gluttony, those that suggest avariciousthoughts, and those that incite us to self-esteem. All the other demons follow behind and in their turn attack thosealready wounded by the first three groups.

62. Indeed, we have come to know from out own observations that it is not possible for a man to fall into sin orbe subject to a particular passion unless he has previously been wounded by one of these three. That is why the devilattacked our Savior with these three thoughts (cf Matt. 4:1-10). But our Lord, having shown Himself superior tothem, commanded the devil to depart, in His goodness and compassion bequeathing to us the victory He hadachieved. He assumed a body in all respects like ours, but without sm (cf. Heb. 4:15), and showed us the unerringpath of sinless-ness, by following which we form in ourselves the new man, who is "formed again . . . according tothe image of his Creator' (Col. 3:10).

63. David teaches us to hate the demons "with perfect hatred' (Ps. 139:22), inasmuch as they are the enemies ofour salvation. This hatred is most necessary for the task of acquiring holiness. But who is the man who hates hisenemies with

perfect hatred? He who no longer sins either in act or in thought. Yet so long as the instruments of ourfriendship with them - that is to say, the things that provoke the passions - are still present in us, how shall weachieve such hatred against them? For a self-indulgent heart cannot nurture this hatred within itself.

64. Dispassion is the wedding garment of the deiform soul that is separated from worldly pleasures, hasrenounced misdirected

desires, and is occupied with devout thoughts and the practice of contemplation in its purest form. But through

intercourse with its shameful passions the soul discards its robe of self-restraint and debases itself by wearing filthyrags and tatters. The man in the Gospels who was bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness was clothed m agarment woven out of such thoughts and acts; and so the Logos declared him to be unworthy of the divine andmimortal wedding-feast (cf Matt. 22:11-13).

65. From self-love, which causes hatred for all men, everything evil in men is derived, as a wise man has toldus. For this terrible enemy, self-love, is the foremost of all evil dispositions, and is like some tyrant with the help ofwhich the three principal passions and the five that come in their wake overwhelm the intellect.

66. I wonder if a man who sates himself with food is able to acquire dispassion. By dispassion I do not meanabstinence from actual sin - for this is called self-control. I mean the abstinence that uproots passionate thoughtsfrom the mind and is also called purity of heart.

67. It is less difficult to cleanse an impure soul than to restore to health a soul which was once cleansed but hasbeen wounded anew. For it is less difficult for those who have recently renounced the confusion of the world toattain dispassion, whatever faults they may previously have committed, than it is for those who have tasted theblessed words of God and walked in the path of salvation and then gone back to sin. This is due partly to theinfluence of bad habit and partly to the fact that the demon of dejection is always dangling the image of sin beforethem. But, with the co-operation of divine grace, a diligent

and assiduous soul; may readily achieve even thisdifficult feat of regaining its dispassion; for, long-suffering and compassionate, grace invites us to repentance, andwith inexpressible mercy accepts those who return, as we have been taught in the Gospels through the parable of theprodigal son (cf. Luke 15: 11-32).

68. No one among us can prevail by his own unaided strength

over the devices and wiles of the evil one; he can prevail only through the invincible power of Christ. Vainly,therefore, do conceited people wander about claiming that they have abolished sin through their asceticaccomplishments and their free will. Sin is abolished only through the grace of God, for it was made dead throughthe mystery of the Cross. This is why that luminary of the Church, St John Chrysostom, says: 'A man's readinessand commitment are not enough if he does not enjoy help from above as well; equally help from above is no benefitto us unless there is also commitment and readiness on our part. These two facts are proved by Judas and Peter. Foralthough Judas enjoyed much help, it was of no benefit to him, since he had no desire for it and contributed nothingfrom himself. But Peter, although willing and ready, fell because he enjoyed no help from above. So holiness iswoven of these two strands. Thus I entreat you neither to entrust everything to God and then fall asleep, nor to think,when you are striving diligently, that you will achieve everything by your own efforts.

69. 'God does not want us to be lying idly on our backs; therefore He does not effect everything Himself. Nor

does He want us to be boastful: therefore He did not give us everything. But having taken away from each of the twoahematives what is harmful. He has left us what is for our good.' Truly does the psalmist say: "Unless the Lordbuilds the house, they labor in vain that build it; unless the Lord guards the city, the watchman keeps awake in vain'(Ps. 127:1). For it is impossible to tread on the asp and basilisk and trample on the lion and dragon' (Ps. 91:13.LXX), unless you have first cleansed yourself as far as you can, and have been strengthened by Him who said to theapostles: 'See, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and on all the enemy's power' (Luke10:19). It is on this

account that we have been commanded to entreat the Master not to "lead us into temptation, butto deliver us from the evil one' (Matt. 6:13). For if we are not delivered from "the fiery arrows of the evil one' (Eph.6:16) through the power and help of Christ, and found worthy of attaining dispassion, we are laboring in vain,thinking that through our own powers or efforts we shall accomplish something. Therefore, he who wishes "to standagainst the wiles of the devil' (Eph. 6:11) and render

them ineffectual, and to share in the divine glory, ought day and night to seek God's help and divine succor withtears and sighs, with insatiable longing and fire in his soul. He who wishes to share in this glory purges his soul ofall worldly pleasures and of hostile passions and desires. It is of such souls that God Speaks when He says: 'I willdwell in them' (2 Cor. 6:16). And the Lord said to His disciples: 'if a man loves Me, he will keep Mycommandments: and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and take up Our abode with him' (John14:23).

70. One of the ancients spoke wisely and simply about thoughts. Judge thoughts, he said, before the judgmentseat of the heart, to discern whether they are ours or those of our enemy. Place those which are good and properlyour own in the inmost shrine of the soul, keeping them in this inviolable treasury. But chastise hostile thoughts withthe whip of the intelligence and banish them, giving them no place, no abode within the bounds of your soul. Or, tospeak more fittingly, slay them completely with the sword of prayer and divine meditation, so that when the robbershave been destroyed, their chief may take fright. For, so he says, a man who examines his thoughts strictly is onewho also truly loves the commandments.

71. He who is battling to repulse what harasses and wars against him must enlist the help of other allies - Imean humility of soul, bodily toil and every other kind of ascetic hardship, together with prayer that springs from anafflicted heart and is accompanied by many tears. He must be like David who says: "Look on my humility and mytoil, and forgive all of my sins' (Ps. 25:18); "Do not pass my tears over in silence' (Ps. 39:12): "My tears have beenmy bread day and night' (Ps. 42:3); and "I mingled my drink with weeping' (Ps. 102:9).

72. The adversary of our life, the devil, employs many devices to make our sins seem small to us. Often hecloaks them with forgetfulness, so that, after suffering a little on their account, we no longer trouble to lament overthem. But, my brethren, let us not forget our offences, even if we wrongly think that they have been forgiven

through repentance; let us always remember our sinful acts and never cease to mourn over them, so that we mayacquire humility as

our constant companion, and thus escape the snares of self-esteem and pride. :

73. Let no one think that he endures suffering and achieves holiness through his own powers. For God is thecause of all the good that comes to us, just as the demon that deceives our souls is the cause of all the evils.Therefore, give thanks to their Cause for whatever good acts you perform; and attribute to their instigator the evilsthat trouble you.

74. He who yokes the practice of the virtues to spiritual knowledge is a skilful farmer, watering the fields of hissoul from two pure springs. For the spring of spiritual knowledge raises the immature soul to the contemplation ofhigher realities; while the spring of ascetic practice mortifies our earthly members: "unchastity, uncleanness,passion, evil desire' (Col. 3:5). Once these are dead, the virtues come into flower and bear the fruits of the Spirit:'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness, self-control' (Gal. 5:22-23). And then thisprudent farmer, having 'crucified the flesh together with the passions and desires' (Gal. 5:24), will say together withSt Paul: "I no longer live, but Christ lives in me; and the life I now live ... I live through faith in the Son of God, wholoved me and gave Himself for me" (Gal. 2:20).

75. Take note, too, you who are a good friend of Christ, that if one passion finds a place in you and takes rootthere, it will introduce other passions also into the same shrine. For even though the passions, as well as theirinstigators the demons, are opposed to each other, yet they are all at one in seeking our perdition.

76. A man who through ascetic effort withers the flower of the flesh, and cuts off

all its desires, bears in hismortal flesh the marks of the Lord (cf. Gal. 6:17).

77. The hardships of the ascetic life end in the repose of dis-passion, while soft ways of living breed shamefulpassions.

78. Do not place reliance on your many years of monastic life and do not fall victim to pride because of theharshness of your ascetic struggles and the way you have endured the wilderness; but keep in mind the saying of theLord that you are a 'useless servant' (Luke 17:10) and have not yet fulfilled the commandment. Indeed, so long aswe are in this life, we have not yet been recalled from exile, but are still sitting by the river of Babylon; we still slaveat making bricks in Egypt, having not yet seen the promised land. Since we

Have not yet 'put off... the old man, who is corrupt because of his deceitful desires' (Eph. 4:22), we have not yet puton 'the image of him who is from heaven', for we still bear "the image of him who is from earth' (1 Cor. 15:49).Accordingly, we have no cause to boast, but ought to weep, calling in prayer to Him who can save us from theburdensome slavery of the harshest of Pharaohs, and can deliver us from this terrible tyranny and bring us to theblessings of the promised land, there to find rest in the holy place of God and to be established at the right hand ofthe Most High. For these blessed realities, which are above thought, are not to be attained through our own works,however righteous we may think them, but depend on the immeasurable mercy of God. So let us not cease fromweeping day and night, following the example of him who says: "I make myself weary with my sighing; every nightI bathe my bed with tears, I water my couch with them" (Ps. 6:6); for 'they that sow in tears shall reap in joy' (Ps.126:5).

79. Expel from yourself the spirit of talkativeness. For in it lurk the most dreadful passions: lying, loosespeech, absurd chatter, buffoonery, obscenity. To put the matter succinctly, 'through talkativeness you will notescape sin' (Prov. 10:19. LXX), whereas a silent man 'is a throne of perceptiveness" (Prov. 12:23. LXX). Moreover,the Lord has said that we shall have to give an' account of every idle word (cf. Matt. 12:36). Thus silence is mostnecessary and profitable.

80. We have been commanded not to revile or abuse in return those who revile

and insult us, but rather tospeak well of them and to bless them (cf. Matt. 5: 44). For in so far as we are at peace with men we fight against thedemons; but when we feel rancor towards our brothers and fight against them, we are at peace with the demons,whom we have been taught to hate "with perfect hatred" (Ps. 139:22), fighting against them without mercy.

81. Do not try to trip your neighbor up with deceitful words, lest you yourself be tripped up by the destroyer.For, as the prophet affirms, "The Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man' (Ps. 5:6), "The Lord will destroy alldeceitful lips, and the tongue that speaks proud words' (Ps. 12:3). Similarly, do not revile your brother for his faults,lest you lapse from kindness and love. For the person who does not show kindness and love towards his brother'does not know God, for God is love' (1 John 4:8), as John the

son of thunder and beloved disciple of Christ proclaims; and he adds that if Christ, the Savior of all, "laid down Hissoul for us, then we ought to lay down our souls for our brethren" (1 John 3:16).

82. Love has fittingly been called the citadel of the virtues, the sum of the Law and the prophets (cf. Matt.

22:40: Rom. 13:10). So let us make every effort until we attain it. Through love we shall shake off the tyranny of thepassions and rise to heaven, lifted up on the wings of the virtues; and we shall see God, so far as this is possible forhuman nature.

83. If God is love, he who has love has God within himself. If love is absent, nothing is of the least profit to us(of. 1 Cor. 13:3); and unless we love others we cannot say that we love God. For, writes St John, Tf a man says, 1love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar" (1 John 4:20). And again he states: 'No man has ever seen God. If welove one another, God dwells in us, and His love is perfected in us" (1 John 4:12). From this it is clear that love isthe most comprehensive and the highest of all the divine blessings spoken of in the Holy Scriptures. And there is noform of virtue through which a man may become akin to God and united with Him that is not dependent upon loveand encompassed by it; for love unites and protects the virtues in an indescribable manner.

84. When we receive visits from our brethren, we should not consider this an irksome interruption of ourstillness, lest we cut ourselves off from the law of love. Nor should we receive them as if we were doing them afavor, but rather as if it is we ourselves who are receiving a favor; and because we are indebted to them, we shouldbeg them cheerfully to enjoy our hospitality, as the patriarch Abraham has shown us. This is why St John, too, says:'My children, let us love not in word or tongue, but in action and truth. And by this we know that we belong to thetruth" (1 John 3: 18-19).

85. Accepting the task of hospitality, the patriarch used to sit at the entrance to his tent (cf. Gen. 18:1), invitingall who passed by, and his table was laden for all comers including the impious and barbarians, without distinction.Hence he was found worthy of that wonderful banquet when he -received angels and the Master of all as his guests.We too, then, should actively and eagerly cultivate hospitality, so that we may receive not only angels, but also GodHimself. For "inasmuch", says the Lord, 'as you have done it to one of the least of these My brethren you have doneit to Me" (Matt. 25:40).

It is good to be generous to all, especially those who cannot repay you.

86. If a man"s heart does not condemn him (cf 1 John 3:21) for having rejected a commandment of God, or fornegligence, or for accepting a hostile thought, then he is pure in heart and worthy to hear Christ say to him: 'Blessedare the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Matt. 5:8).

87. Let us try to use our intelligence in training our senses, especially the eyes, the ears and the tongue, notallowing them to see, hear and speak in an impassioned way, but only to our profit. For nothing can more easily slipinto sin than these organs, when they are not trained by the intelligence. Again, (here is nothing more apt for keepingthem safe than the intelligence, which guides and regulates them and leads them towards what is necessary and whatit wishes. For when they are rebellious, the sense of smell becomes effeminate, the sense of touch becomesindiscriminate, and innumerable passions come swarming in. But when they are subordinate to the intelligence.

there is deep peace and settled calm in the whole person.

88. The fragrance of a costly aromatic oil, even though kept in a vessel, pervades the atmosphere of the wholehouse, and gives pleasure not only to those near it but also to others in the vicinity; similarly the fragrance of a holysoul, beloved of God, when given out through all the senses of the body, conveys to those who perceive it theholiness that lies within. When in the presence of one whose tongue utters nothing harsh and discordant, but onlywhat is a blessing and benefit for those who listen, whose eyes are humble, whose ears do not listen to impropersongs or words, who moves discreetly and whose face is not dissolute with laughter but rather disposed to tears andmourning, which of us will not feel that such a soul is filled with the fragrance of holmess? Thus the Savior says:'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven'(Matt. 5:16).

89. What Christ our God called the 'narrow way" (Matt. 7:14), He also called an 'easy yoke" and 'light burden'(Matt. 11:30). How could He equate these things when they seem to be contraries? For our nature, certainly, thispath is harsh and steep, but those who pursue it wholeheartedly and with good hope, and who aspire after holiness,find it attractive and full of delight, for it brings them

pleasure, not affliction. Hence they eagerly follow the narrow and painful way, greatly preferring it to that which isbroad and spacious. Listen to St Luke, who tells us how the apostles, after being beaten, departed from the presenceof the council rejoicing (cf Acts 5:41), even though this is not the natural effect of a beating. For scourges normallycause, not pleasure and joy, but pain and suffering. Yet if, because of Christ, they resulted in joy, what wonder is itif other forms of bodily hardship and ill-treatment have, because of Him, the same effect?

90. While we are oppressed and imprisoned by the passions, we are often at a loss to know why we suffer fromthem. We must, therefore, realize that it is because we allow ourselves to be diverted from the contemplation of Godthat we are taken captive in this way. But if a man fixes his intellect without distraction on our Master and God, thenthe Savior of all can Himself be trusted to deliver such a soul from its impassioned servitude. It is of this that theprophet speaks when he says: 'I have set the Lord always before me; for He is at my right hand,

so that I shall not bemoved' (Ps. 16:8). What is sweeter or safer than always to have the Lord at our right hand, protecting and guardingus and not letting us be moved? And to attain this is within our power.

91. There is no gainsaying what the fathers have so well affirmed, that a man does not find rest except byacquiring inwardly the thought that God and he alone exist; and so he does not let his intellect wander at all towardsanything whatsoever, but longs only for Him, cleaving to Him alone. Such a man will find true rest and freedomfrom the tyranny of the passions. "My soul', as David says, 'is bound to Thee; Thy right hand has upheld me' (Ps.63:8. LXX).

92. Self-love, love of pleasure and love of praise banish remembrance of God from the soul. Self-love begets

unimaginable evils. And when remembrance of God is absent, there is a tumult of the passions within us.

93. He who has completely uprooted self-love from his heart will, with God's help, easily conquer all the otherpassions. For a man dominated by self-love is under the power of other passions as well, since from it arise anger,irritation, rancor, love of pleasure,

licentiousness. By self-love we mean an impassioned disposition towards and love for the body, and the fulfillmentof carnal desires.

94. Whatever a man loves, he desires at all costs to be near to continuously and uninterruptedly, and he turnshimself away from everything that hinders him from being in contact and dwelling with the object of his love. It isclear therefore that he who loves God also desires always to be with Him and to converse with Him. This comes topass in us through pure prayer. Accordingly, let us apply ourselves to prayer with all our power; for it enables us tobecome akin to God. Such a man was he who said: '0 God, my God, I cry to Thee at dawn; my soul has thirsted forThee" (Ps. 63:1. LXX). For the man who cries to God at dawn has withdrawn his intellect from every vice andclearly is wounded by divine love.

95. We have been taught that dispassion is bom from self-control and humility,

while spiritual knowledge isbom from faith. Through these the soul makes progress in discrimination and love. And once she has embraceddivine love, she never ceases to rise towards its height on the wings of pure prayer, until she comes "to the knowl-edge of the Son of God', as St Paul says, "to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ'(Eph. 4:13).

96. Through active virtue desire is brought under control and anger is bridled. Through spiritual knowledge andcontemplation the intellect makes its spiritual ascent and, being raised above material things, departs towards God,attaining true blessedness.

97. Our first struggle is this: to reduce the passions and to conquer them entirely. Our second task is to acquirethe virtues, and not allow our soul to be empty and idle. The third stage of the spiritual journey is watchfully topreserve the fruits of our virtues and our labors. For we have been commanded not only to work diligently, but alsoto preserve vigilantly (cf Gen. 2:15).

98. "Let your loins be girded, and your lamps burning', says the Lord (Luke 12:35). A good girdle for our loins- one which enables us to be nimble and unhampered - is self-control combined with humility of heart. By self-control I mean abstinence from all the passions. Our spiritual lamp is lit by pure prayer and perfect love. Those whohave prepared themselves in this way are indeed like men who wait expectantly for their Lord. When He comes andknocks, they open at once; and when He has entered - together with the Father and the Holy Spirit - He will take upHis abode with

them (cf. John 14:23). Blessed are those servants whom the Lord when He comes will find acting in this manner (cf.Luke, 12:37).

99. A monk, as a son, must love God with all his heart and all his mind (cf. Deut. 6:5, Mark 12:30), and, as aservant, he must reverence and obey Him, and fulfill His commandments with 'fear and trembling' (Phil. 2:12). Hemust be 'fervent in spirit" (Rom. 12: 11), and wear 'the whole armor' of the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph. 6:11). He muststrive for the enjoyment of eternal life and do all that is prescribed. He must be in a state of inner wakefulness, guardhis heart from evil thoughts, and through good thoughts must continually practice divine

meditation. He mustexamine himself daily concerning his evil thoughts and acts, and must correct any defects. He must not becomeproud because of his achievements, but must call himself a 'useless servant' (Luke 17:10), altogether in arrears overfulfilling his duties. He must give thanks to God and ascribe to Him the grace of his achievements, and do nothing atall from self-esteem or love of popularity, but do everything in secret and seek praise only from God (cf. Rom.2:29). Above all and in all things he must completely fortify his soul with the Orthodox faith, according to thedogmas of the Holy Catholic Church as taught by the divine message-bearers, the apostles, and by the holy fathers.Great is the reward for those who live in such a manner. They receive everlasting life and an indestructible abodewith the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the coessential Divinity in three Persons.

100. 'Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God, and keep His commandments, for this is thewhole man' (Eccles. 12:13. LXX). Here the Preacher says to us: 1 show you in summary form the best way tosalvation; fear God and keep His commandments. By fear he means not the initial fear of punishments, but theperfect and perfecting fear, which we ought to have out of love for Him who has given the commandments. For ifwe refrain from sin merely out of fear of punishment, it is quite clear that, unless punishment had awaited us, weshould have done things deserving punishment, since our propensity is for sinning. But if we abstain from evilactions not through threat of punishment, but because we hate such actions, then it is from love of the Master that wepractice the virtues, fearful lest we should fall away from Him. For when we fear that we may neglect somethingthat has been

enjoined, the fear is clean (cf. Ps. 19:9A arising for the sake of the good itself. This fear purifies our souls, beingequal in power to perfect love. He who has this fear and keeps the commandments is the 'whole man", in otherwords, the perfect and complete man.

Knowing these things, let us fear God and keep His commandments, so that we may be perfect and entire in thevirtues. And having a humbled spirit and a contrite heart, let us repeat unceasingly to the Lord the prayer of the greatand divine Arsenios: 'My God, do not abandon me. I have done nothing good before

Thee, but grant me, in Thycompassion, the power to make a start." For the whole of our salvation lies in God's mercy and compassion. To Himbe glory, might and worship: to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and through all the ages.Amen.

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What an immense struggle it is to break the fetter binding us so strongly to material things, to stop worshippingthese things, and to acquire instead a state of holiness. Indeed, unless our soul is truly noble and courageous itcannot embark on such a task. For our goal is not merely the purification of the passions: this by itself is not realvirtue, but preparation for virtue. To purification from vicious habits must be added the acquisition of the virtues.

With respect to its intelligent aspect, to purify the soul is to eradicate and completely expunge from it alldegrading and distorted features, all 'worldly cares', as the Divine Liturgy puts it, all turbulence, evil tendencies andsenseless prepossessions. With respect to its desiring aspect, it is to purge away every impulsion towards what ismaterial, to cease from viewing things according to the senses, and to be obedient to the intelligence. And withrespect to the soul's mcensive power, purification consists in never being perturbed by anything that happens.

In the wake of this purification, and the mortification or correction of ugly features, there should follow spiritualascent and deification. For after abandoning what is evil, one must practice what is good. One must first denyoneself and then, taking up the cross, must follow the Master towards the supreme state of deification.

What are ascent and deification? For the intellect, they are perfect knowledge of created things, and of Him whois above created things, so far as such knowledge is accessible to human nature. For the will, they are total andcontinuous striving towards primal goodness. And for the incensive power, they are energetic and effectiveimpulsion towards the object of aspiration, persistent, relentless, and unarrested by any practical difficulties.

pressing forward impetuously and undeviatingly.[V2] 39

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The soul's impulsion towards beauty should surpass its impulsion towards what is base to the same degree asintelligible beauty surpasses sensible beauty. One should provide the body only with what is needed to keep itfunctioning properly. To intend to do this is easy, but to achieve it is more difficult, for without great effort onecannot uproot the soul's well-entrenched habits.

Nor indeed is knowledge to be acquired without effort. Certainly, to keep one's vision intently fixed on divinethings until the will acquires the habit of doing this requires considerable labor over a long period of time. Theintellect has to exert itself to oppose the downward drag of the senses: and this contest and battle against the bodycontinues until death, even if it seems to diminish as anger and desire wither away, and as the senses are subjugatedto the transcendent knowledge of the intellect.

It should be remarked, however, that an unillumined soul, since it has no help from God, can neither begenuinely purified, nor ascend to the divine light. What was said above refers to those who are baptized.

Moreover, a distinction should be made between different kinds of knowledge. Knowledge here on earth is oftwo kinds: natural and supernatural. The second can be understood by reference to the first. Natural knowledge isthat which the soul can acquire through the use of its natural faculties and powers when investigating creation andthe cause of creation - in so far, of course, as this is possible for a soul bound to matter. For, when speaking of thesenses, the imagination and the intellect, it has to be said that the energy of the intellect is blunted by being joinedand mingled with the body. As a result, it cannot have direct Contact with intelligible forms, but requires, in order toapprehend them, the imagination, which by nature uses images, and shares in material extension and density.Accordingly, the intellect while in the flesh needs to use material images in order to apprehend intelligible forms.We call natural knowledge, then, whatever knowledge the intellect in such a state acquires by its own natural means.

Supernatural knowledge, on the other hand, is that which enters the intellect in a manner transcending its ownmeans and power: that is to say, the intelligible objects that constitute such knowledge

surpass the capacity of an intellect joined to a body, so that a know-ledge of them pertains naturally only to anintellect which is free from the body. Such knowledge is mfused by God alone when He finds an mtellect purified ofall material attachment and inspired by divine love.

Not only knowledge but virtue as well is divided in this way. One kind of virtue does not transcend nature, andthis can fittingly be called natural virtue. The other, which is energized only by the primal source of beauty, is aboveour natural capacity and state: aid this kind of virtue should be called supernatural.

Knowledge and virtue, then, are divided in this way. An unil-lumined person may possess natural knowledgeand virtue, but never those which are supernatural. How could he, since he does not participate in their energizingcause? But the illumined man can possess both. Moreover, although he cannot acquire supernatural virtue at allunless he has first acquired natural virtue, he can participate in supernatural knowledge without first acquiringnatural knowledge. In addition, just as sense and imagination are far superior and more noble in man than they are inanimals, so natural virtue and knowledge are far superior and more noble in the person who is illumined than in theperson who is unillumined, although both may possess them.

Further, that aspect of natural knowledge concerned with the virtues and with the habits opposing them alsoseems to be of two kinds. One kind is theoretical knowledge, when a man speculates about these matters but lacksexperience of them, and is sometimes unsure about what he says. The other is practical and, so to speak, alive, sincethe knowledge in question is confirmed by experience, and so is clear and trustworthy, and in no way uncertain ordoubtful.

In view of all this, there appear to be four obstacles which hinder the intellect in the acquisition of virtue. First,there is prepossession, that is, the ingrained influence of habits running counter to virtue; and this, operative over along period, exerts a pressure which drags the intellect down towards earthly things. Secondly, there is the action ofthe senses, stimulated by sensible beauty and drawing the intellect after it. Thirdly, there is the dulling of noeticenergy due to the intellect's connection with the body. The intellect of an embodied soul is not

related to anintelligible object in the same way as sight is to a visible object or, in general, the senses are

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to sensory objects. Immaterial intellects apprehend intelligible objects more effectively than sight apprehends visibleobjects. But just as faulty sight visualizes its images of natural objects somewhat indistinctly and unclearly, so does

our intellect, when embodied, apprehend intelligible objects. And since it cannot BOW clearly discern intelligiblebeauties, it cannot aspire after them either. For one has a longing for something only to the degree that one possessesknowledge of it. Hence the intellect - since it cannot help being drawn towards what appears to be beautiful, whetheror not it really is so - is drawn down to sensible beauty, for this now makes a clearer impression on it.

The fourth of the obstacles impeding the intellect in its acquisition of virtue is the pernicious influence ofunclean and hostile demons. It is impossible to speak of all the various snares they set on the spiritual path, makinguse of the senses, the reason, the intellect - in fact, of everything that exists. If He who carries the lost sheep on Hisshoulders (cf Luke 15:5) did not in His infinite care protect those who turn to Him, not a single soul would escape.

Three things are needed in order to overcome these obstacles. The first and most important thing is to look toGod with our whole soul, to ask for help from His hand, and to put all our trust in Hmi, knowing full well thatwithout His assistance we shall inevitably be dragged away from Him, The second - which I regard as an overture tothe first - is constantly to nourish the intellect with knowledge. By knowledge I mean that of all created things,sensible and intelligible, both as they are in themselves and with reference to the primal Source, since they derivefrom it and are related to it; and in addition to this, the contemplation, as far as is possible, of the Cause of allcreated things, through the qualities that appertain to Him. To be concerned with the nature of created things has avery purifying effect. It frees us from passionate-attachment to them and from delusion about them; and it is thesurest of means for raising our soul to the Source of all. For all beauty, miracle, magnificence reflects what issupremely

beautiful, miraculous and magnificent - reflects, rather, the Source that is above beauty, miracle andmagnificence.

If the mind is always occupied with these things, how can it not long for supernal goodness itself? If it can bedrawn to what is alien to it, how will it not be far more strongly drawn to what is cognate?

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When the soul cleaves to what is kindred to it, how can it turn away from what it loves to anything inferior? Itwill even resent its incarnate life, finding it a hindrance to the attaining of the beautiful. For though the intellect,while living in matter, beholds intelligible beauty but dimly, yet intelligible blessings are such that even a slightemanation from that overflowing beauty, or a faint vision of it, can impel the intellect to soar beyond all that isoutside the intelligible realm, and to aspire to that alone, never letting itself lapse from the delight it offers, comewhat distress there may.

The third way by which we can overcome the obstacles already mentioned is to mortify our partner, the body;for otherwise we cannot attain a clear and distinct vision of the intelligible world. The flesh is mortified or, rather,crucified with Christ, through fasting, vigils, sleeping on the ground, wearing coarse clothing and only what is

essential, through suffering and toil. In this fashion it is refined and purified, made light and subtle, readily andunresistingly following the guidance of the intellect and rising upwards with it. Without such mortification all ourefforts are vain.

When these three holy ways are established in mutual harmony, they beget in the soul the choir of blessedvirtues; for those whom they adorn are free from all trace of sin and blessed with every virtue. Yet the rejection ofmaterial wealth, or of fame, may distress the intelligence; for the soul, still bound to such things, is pierced by manypassions. None the less I firmly maintain that a soul attached to wealth and praise cannot mount upwards. Equally Isay that a soul loses all attachment to these things once it has practiced this triad of ways sufficiently for it to havebecome habitual. For if the soul is persuaded that only the beauty which is beyond everything is to be regarded astruly beautiful, while of other

things the most beautiful is that which is most like the supreme beauty, and so ondown the scale, how can it relish silver, gold or fame, or any other degrading thing?

Even what most holds us back -1 mean our cares and concerns -is no exception to the rule. For what cares will aman have, if he is not attached to anything worldly or involved with it? The cloud of cares comes from the fumes, soto speak, of the main passions -self-indulgence, avarice, love of praise. Once you are free of these you will also havecast off your cares.

Sound moral judgment has the same effect as wisdom, and is

a most powerful factor drawing us upwards. Hence it too has its part to play. For the knowledge of the virtuesinvolves the most scrupulous discrimination between good and evil; and this requires sound moral judgment.Experience and the struggle with the body teach us how to use such judgment in our warfare.

Fear also comes into the argument. For the greater our longing for God the greater grows our fear; and the morewe hope to attain God, the more we fear Him. If we are wounded by divine love, the sting of fear exceeds that of athousand threats of punishment. For as nothing is more blessed than to attain God, so nothing is more terrible thanthis great fear of losing Him.

To come to another point: everything may be understood in terms of its purpose. It is this that determines thedivision of everything into its constituent parts, as well as the mutual relationship of those parts. Now the purpose ofour life is blessedness or, what is the same thing, the kingdom of heaven or of God. This is not only to behold theTrinity, supreme in Kingship, but also to receive an influx of the divine and, as it were, to suffer deification; for bythis influx what is lacking and imperfect in us is supplied and perfected. And the provision by such divine influx ofwhat is needed is the food of spiritual beings. There is a kind of eternal circle, which ends where it begins. For thegreater our noetic perception, the more we long to perceive; and the greater our longing, the greater our enjoyment;

and the greater our enjoyment, the more our perception is deepened, and so the

motionless movement, or themotionless immobility, begins again. Such then is our purpose, m so far as we can understand it. We must now seehow we can attain it.

To intelligent souls, which as intellective beings are only a little lower than angelic intellects, life in this worldis a struggle and incarnate life an open contest. The prize of victory is the state we have described, a gift worthy bothof God's goodness and of His justice: of His justice, because these blessings are attained not without our own sweat;of His goodness, because His boundless generosity surpasses all our toil -especially as the very capacity for doinggood and the actual doing of it are themselves gifts of God.

What, then, is the nature of our contest in this world? The intelligent soul is conjoined with an animal-like body,which has its being from the earth and gravitates downwards. It is so mixed with the body that though they are totalopposites they form a single

being. Without change or confusion in either of them, and with each acting in accordance with its nature, theycompose a single person, or hypostasis, with two complete natures. In this composite two-natured being, man, eachof his natures functions in accordance with its own particular powers. It is characteristic of the body to desire what isakin to it. This longing for what is akin to them is natural to created beings, since indeed their existence depends onthe intercourse of like with like, and on their enjoyment of material things through the senses. Then, being heavy,the body welcomes relaxation. These things are proper and desirable for our animal-like nature. But to the intelligentsoul, as an intellective entity, what is natural and desirable is the realm of intelligible realities and its enjoyment ofthem in the manner characteristic of it. Before and above all what is characteristic of the intellect is an intenselonging for God. It desires to enjoy Him and other intelligible realities, though it cannot do this withoutencountering obstacles.

The first man could indeed, without any hindrance, apprehend and enjoy sensory things by means of the sensesand intelligible things with the intellect. But he should have given his attention to the higher rather than to the lower,for he was

as able to commune with intelligible things through the intellect, as he was with sensory things throughthe senses. I do not say that Adam ought not to have used the senses, for it was not for nothing that he was investedwith a body. But he should not have indulged in sensory things. When perceiving the beauty of creatures, he shouldhave referred it to its source and as a consequence have found his enjoyment and his wonder fulfilled in that, thusgiving himself a twofold reason for marveling at the Creator. He should not have attached himself, as he did, tosensory things and have lost himself in wonder at them, neglecting the Creator of intelligible beauty.

Thus Adam used the senses wrongly and was spellbound by sensory beauty; and because the fruit appeared to

him to be beautiful and good to eat (Gen. 3:6), he tasted it and forsook the enjoyment of intelhgible things. So it wasthat the just Judge judged him unworthy of what he had rejected - the contemplation of God and of created beings -and, making darkness His secret place (cf 2 Sam. 22:12; Ps. 18:11), deprived him of Himself and of immaterialrealities. For holy things must not be made available to the impure. What he fell in love with. God permitted him toenjoy.

allowing him to live according to the senses, with but faint vestiges of intellectual perception.

Henceforward our struggle against the things of this world became harder, because it is now no longer in ourpower to enjoy intelligible realities in a way corresponding to that in which we enjoy sensory realities with thesenses, even though we are greatly assisted by baptism, which purifies and exalts us. Yet, in so far as we can, wemust give our attention to the intelligible and not to the sensible world. We must reverence it and aspire to it; but wemust not reverence any sensory object in and for itself, or try to enjoy it m that way; for in truth what; is sensorycannot compare with what is intelligible. Just as the essence of the one far excels that of the other, so does its beauty.To aspire to what is ugly rather than to what is beautiful, to what is ignoble rather than to what is noble, is sheerlunacy. And if that is the case where both sensible and intelligible creations

are involved, how much more so is itwhen we prefer matter, formless and ugly, to God Himself.

This, then, is our contest and struggle: strictly to watch ourselves, so that we always strive to enjoy intelligiblerealities, directing intellect and appetite to that end, and never allowing them secretly to be beguiled by the sensesinto revering sensory things for their own sake. And if we have to use the senses, we should use them in order tograsp the Creator through His creation, seeing Him reflected in created things as the sun is reflected m water, sincein their inner beings, they are in varying degrees images of the primal cause of all.

Such, then, is our aim. How can we achieve it? As we said, the body desires to enjoy through the senses what isakin to it; and the stronger it is, the stronger its desire. But this conflicts with the soul's purpose. So the soul mustmake every effort to curb the senses, so that we do not indulge in sensible realities in the way described. But sincethe stronger the body, the stronger its desire, and the stronger its desire the harder it is to check, the soul mustmortify the body through fasting, vigils, standing, sleeping on the ground, going unwashed, and through every otherkind of hardship, thus reducing its strength and making it tractable and obedient to the soul's noetic activities. Thisis the aim. Yet it is easy to wish, hard to achieve; and failures greatly outnumber the successes, because even if weare most attentive, the senses often beguile us. So a third

remedy has been devised: prayer and tears. Prayer gives thanks for blessings received and asks for failures to beforgiven and for power to strengthen us for the future; for without God's help the soul can indeed do nothing. Nonethe less, to persuade the will to have the strongest possible desire for union with and enjoyment of Him, for whom itlongs, and to direct itself totally towards Him, is the major part of the achievement of our aim. And tears too havegreat power. They gain God's mercy for our faults, purify us of the defilements produced through sensual pleasures,and Spur our desire upwards.

Thus, our aim is the- contemplation of intelligible realities and total aspiration towards them. The mortificationof the flesh, together with the fasting, self-restraint and other things that contribute to it, are all practiced as a meansto this

end. And in their company is prayer. Each has many aspects; some contribute to one thing, some to another.

Love of praise and love of material wealth must not be regarded as pertaining to the body. Only the love ofsensual pleasure pertains to the body. The fitting remedy for this is bodily hardship. Love of praise and love ofmaterial wealth are the progeny of ignorance. Having no experience of true blessings and no knowledge of noeticrealities, the soul has adopted such bastard offspring, thinking that riches can supply its needs. Also it plunges aftermaterial wealth in order to satisfy its love for pleasure and praise, and even for its own sake, as if such wealth were ablessing in itself. All this results from ignorance of true blessings. Love of praise does not derive from any lack onthe part of the body, for it satisfies no physical need. Inexperience and ignorance of primal goodness and true glorygive rise to it. Indeed, ignorance is the root of all evils. For no one who has once grasped as he should the true natureof things - from where each thing comes and how it is perverted - can then totally disregard his own purpose and bedragged down to worldly things. The soul does not want a good that is only apparent. And if it is under the sway ofsome habit, it is also quite able to overcome this habit. Yet even before the habit was formed it had been deceived byignorance. Hence one should above all strive after a true knowledge of created beings, and then spur one's willtowards primal goodness, scorning all worldly things and aware of their great vanity. For what do they contribute toour own true purpose?

To sum up briefly. An intelligent soul, while in the body, has but

one task: to realize its own purpose. But since the will's energy remains unstimulated unless there is intellection, webegin by trying to energize noetically. Noetic activity is either for the sake of willing or, more commonly, for its

own sake as well as for the sake of willing. Blessedness - of which any significant life on earth is not only anoverture but also a prefigurement - is characterized by both energies: by both intellection and willing, that is, by bothlove and spiritual pleasure. Whether both these energies are supreme, or one

is superior to the other, is open todiscussion. For the moment we shall regard both of them as supreme. One we call contemplative and the otherpractical. Where these supreme energies are concerned, the one cannot be found without the other, m the case of thelower energies, sequent to these two, each may be found singly. Whatever hinders these two energies, or opposesthem, we call vice. Whatever fosters them, or frees them from obstacles, we call virtue. Energies that spring fromthe virtues are good; those that spring from their opposites are distorted and sinful. The supreme goal, whose energy,as we know, is compound of intellection and willing, endows each particular energy with a specific form, whichmay be used for either good or evil.

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St Maximos the Confessor

(c. 580 - 662)(I'olume 2, pp. 48-305)

Introductory Note

The extreme importance of St Maximos the Confessor (580-662) for the Orthodox spiritual tradition is indicated bythe fact that no other writer is assigned so much space in the Philokalia. A member of the aristocracy, afterreceiving an elaborate education St Maximos served at first in the civil service, perhaps as secretary to the EmperorHeraklios. Around 614 he became a monk at the monastery of Philippikos in Chrysopolis (Scutari), close toConstantinople, subsequently moving to another monastery not far distant at Cyzikos (Erdek). In 626, at the time ofthe Persian invasion, he fled to Crete and eventually to Africa, where he remained for some years. From 633-4onwards he played a leading part in opposing the heresies of Monoenergism and Monotheletism, and because ofthis he was arrested in 653 by the imperial authorities, brought to Constantinople for trial, and sent into exile.Further trials and condemnations followed, the last being at Constantinople in 662, after which he was flogged, histongue was plucked out and his right hand cut off. He died soon afterwards as an exile in the Caucasus. Hismemorial is observed in the Orthodox Church on 21 January, and also on the day of his death, 13 August.

In his numerous writings St Maximos discusses almost all aspects of Christian truth, including the interpretationof Scripture, the doctrine of the incarnation, ascetic practice, and the Divine Liturgy. He insists upon the close linkbetween

dogma and prayer. When he opposed Monotheletism, this was not because of some technicality, butbecause such a view subverted the understanding of the full reality of man's salvation and deification in Christ. TheMonotheletes wished to reconcile the supporters of the Council of Chalcedon (451), who ascribed two natures tothe incarnate Christ, with the Monophysites, who believed that He has only one nature; and so they proposed as acompromise the theory that Christ has two natures, the one divine and the other human, but only a single

will. Against this St Maximos maintained that human nature without a human will is an unreal abstraction: if Christdoes not have a hu- man will as well as a divine will. He is not truly man; and if He is not truly man, the Christianmessage of salvation is rendered void. What we see in Christ our Saviour is precisely a human will, genuinely free

yet held in unwavering obedience to His divine will; and it is by virtue of this voluntary co-operation of manhoodwith divinity in Christ, which restored the integrity of human nature, that we are enabled to make our own willsfreely obedient to the will of God and so to attain salvation. St Maximos' teaching was confirmed after his death bythe Sixth Ecumenical Council, meeting at Constantinople in 680-1.

The Philokalia contains four works under the name of St Maximos:

(1) Four Hundred Texts on Love. This is the most immediately attractive of all his works and also one of theeasiest to understand. It is among his earlier writings, probably composed by 626, while he was at Cyzikos.^

(2) Two Hundred Texts on Theology and the Incarnate Dispensation of the Son of God. This seems to havebeen written in Africa between 63o and 634, and is far more complex in its argument. With remarkable subtlety StMaximos has adapted and drawn into a single synthesis ideas taken from Origen (c. 185- c. 254), Evagrios (345/6-399) and St Dionysios the Areopagite (c. 500).' Although doubts have sometimes been expressed, there seems nogood reason to question the attribution to St Maximos.

(3) Various Texts on Theology, the Divine Economy, and Virtue and Vice (500 in number). In the Greek edition ofthe Philokalia this is treated as a continuation of the preceding treatise. Two Hundred Texts; but in fact the twoworks are altogether distinct, and are treated as such in this translation. The J'arious Texts, in their present form, arenot an authentic work of St Maximos himself but rather a

' There is an earlier English translation, with valuable introduction and notes, by Dom Polycarp Sherwood, St. Maximns the Confessor: TheAscetic Life, The Four Centuries on Charity, (Ancient Christian Writers 21: Westminster, Maryland, 1955).

^ On St Maximos' use of his sources, see Hans Urs von Balthasar, Die 'Gnostischen Centurien' des Maximus Confessor (FreiburgerTheologische Studien 61 : Freiburg im Breisgau, 1941); incorporated, in revised form, in Kosmischg Liturgi.e. Das Weltbild Maximus' desBekenners (2nd ed., Einsiedeln, 1961), pp. 482-643. For a French translation of the first century of the Two Hundred Texts, see A. Riou, Lemonde etTEglise scionMaxime le Confessour (ThiologieHistorique 22: Paris, 1973), pp. 240-61.

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'Maximian anthology', a collection of extracts from his writings made by a later compiler, probably not before theeleventh or twelfth century. The sources of this anthology are as follows:

J'arious Texts i, 1-25 cannot be traced in the known writings of St Maximos. The manuscript evidence stronglysuggests that sections 1-15 are his genuine work; in the case of sections 16-25 Maximian authorship is less certain,but is not to be excluded.

i, 26-47 are extracted from his Letters.

i, 48-v, 61 are taken from the treatise To Thalassios: On J'arious Questions relating to Holy Scripture, which wasprobably written in Africa during 630-4. Together with extracts from St Maximos, the compiler has also includedmany

passages from the. scholia or commentaries on the work To Thalassios: On J'arious Questions; there isgeneral agreement that these scholia are not by St Maximos himself and they probably date for the most part fromthe tenth century.

V, 62-100 are taken from the Ambiqua, a discussion of disputed texts in the works of St Gregory of Nazianzos,which St Maximos wrote in Africa during 628-34. The compiler has inserted here some extracts from St Dionysiosthe Areopagite.

In an appendix we have briefly indicated which of the J'arious Texts are from St Maximos, and which from thescholiast or St Dionysios.^ As can be seen from marginal notes in the Greek Philokalia, St Nikodimos and StMakarios realized that parts of the J'arious Texts came not from St Maximos himself but from the scholiast. Why,in that case, did they choose to include this later compilation, and not the original text of To Thalassios: OnJ'arious Questions? A possible answer is that the original text is very lengthy and at times highly obscure; thecompiler, while sometimes increasing the obscurity by omitting vital passages, has on the whole selected thesections more immediately relevant to the spiritual life. Perhaps, then, by choosing the later anthology and not theoriginal work, the editors hoped to render these writings accessible to a wider readership.

' For fuller details, with exact references, see W. Soppa, Die Diversa Capita unter den Schriften des hi. Maximus Confessor in deutscher

Bearbeitung und quellenkritischer Beleuchtung (Dresden, 1922); M.-Th. Disdier, 'Une oeuvre douteuse de saint Maxime le Confesseur: Lescinq Centuries theologiques', Echos d'Orient xxx (1931), pp. 160-78; P. Sherwood, An Annotated Date-List of the Works of Maximus theConfessor (Stndia Anselmiana 30: Rome, 1952), pp. 35-36.

St Maximos the Confessor

Introductory Note

(4.) On the Lord's Prayer. This is generally accepted as an authentic work of St Maximos, perhaps written about628-30.^

For the Four Hundred Texts on Love we have used the critical edition of the

Greek text by A. Ceresa-Gastaldo(Yerba Seniorum, N.S. 3: Rome, 1963). For the other three works we have compared the Greek text in thePhilokalia with that of Combefis and Oehler in Migne, P.G. xc-xci, which is on the whole more reliable.

' French translation in Riou, op. cit., pp. 214-39.

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St Maximos the Confessor

Four Hundred Texts on Love

Foreword to Elpidios the Presbyter

In addition to my treatise on the ascetic life I am also sending you. Father Elpidios, this treatise on love divided, onthe analogy of the four Gospels, into four centuries of chapters. It may not fulfill your expectations, but it is the bestthat I can do. Moreover, you should know. Father, that these chapters are not the products of my own mind. On thecontrary, I have gone through the writings of the holy fathers and collected from them passages relevant to my sub-ject, condensing much material into short paragraphs and in this way making it easy to remember and to assimilate.

In sending these chapters to you I beg you to read them with sympathy and to seek out only what is profitable inthem, overlooking the inelegant language. I also ask you to pray for my unworthy self, bereft as I am of all spiritualblessing. I have this request too: do not be annoyed by what I have written, for I have merely carried out what I wascommanded to do. I say this because we who plague people with words are many nowadays, while those who teachor are taught by actions are very few.

Please give careful attention to each chapter. For I suspect that not all the chapters are easy for everyone tounderstand. Many of them will need to be studied closely by most readers even if what they say seems to be verysimple. If anything in these chapters should prove useful to the soul, it will be revealed to the reader by the grace ofGod, provided that he reads, not out of curiosity, but in the fear and love of God. If a man reads this or any otherwork not to gain spiritual benefit but to track down matter with which to abuse the author, so that in his conceit hecan show himself to be the more learned, nothing profitable will ever be revealed to him in anything.

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First Century

1. Love is a holy state of the soul, disposing it to value knowledge of God above all created things. We cannotattain lasting possession of such love while we are still attached to anything worldly.

2. Dispassion engenders love, hope in God engenders dispassion, and patience and forbearance engender hope inGod; these in turn are the product of complete self-control, which itself springs from fear of God. Fear of God isthe result of faith in God.

3. If you have faith in the Lord you will fear punishment, and this fear will lead you to control the passions. Onceyou control the passions you will accept affliction patiently, and through such acceptance you will acquire hopein God. Hope in God separates the intellect from every worldly attachment, and when the intellect is detached inthis way it will acquire love for God.

4. The person who loves God values knowledge of God more than anything created by God, and pursues suchknowledge ardently and ceaselessly.

5. If everything that exists was made by God and for God, and God is superior to the things made by Him, he whoabandons what is superior and devotes himself to what is inferior shows that he values things made by Godmore than God Himself.

6. When your mtellect is concentrated on the love of God you will pay little attention to visible things and willregard even your own body as something alien.

7. Since the soul is more noble than the body and God incomparably more noble than the world created by Him,he who values the body more than the soul and the world created by God more than the Creator Himself issimply a worshipper of idols.

8. If you distract your intellect from its love for God and

concentrate it, not on God, but on some sensible object, you thereby show that you value the body more than thesoul and the things made by God more than God Himself.

9. Since the light of spiritual knowledge is the intellect's life, and since this light is engendered by love for God, itis rightly said that nothing is greater than divine love (cf 1 Cor. 13:13).

10. When in the intensity of its love for God the intellect goes out of itself, then it has no sense of itself or of anycreated thing. For when it is illumined by the infinite light of God, it becomes insensible to everything made by

Him, just as the eye becomes insensible to the stars when the sun rises.

1L AU the virtues co-operate with the inteUect to produce this intense longing for God, pure prayer above all. Forby soaring towards God through this prayer the intellect rises above the realm of created beings.

12. When the intellect is ravished through love by divine knowledge and stands outside the realm of created beings,it becomes aware of God's infinity. It is then, according to Isaiah, that a sense of amazement makes it consciousof its own lowliness and in all sincerity it repeats the prophet's words: 'How abject I am, for I am pierced to theheart; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips: and my eyes have seenthe King, the Lord of hosts' (Isa. 6:5).

13. The person who loves God cannot help loving every man as himself, even though he is grieved by the passionsof those who are not yet purified. But when they amend their lives, his delight is indescribable and knows nobounds.

14. A soul filled with thoughts of sensual desire and hatred is unpurified.

15. If we detect any trace of hatred in our hearts against any man whatsoever for committing any fault, we areutterly estranged from love for God, since love for God absolutely precludes us from hating any man.

16. He who loves Me, says the Lord, will keep My commandments (cf. John 14:15, 23); and 'this is Mycommandment, that you love one another' (John 15:12). Thus he who does not love his neighbor fails to keepthe commandment, and so cannot love the Lord.

17. Blessed is he who can love all men equally.

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First Century

18. Blessed is he who is not attached to anything transitory or corruptible.

19. Blessed is the intellect that transcends all sensible objects and ceaselessly delights in divine beauty.

20. If you make provision for the desires of the flesh (cf. Rom. 13:14) and bear a grudge against your neighbor onaccount of something transitory, you worship the creature instead of the Creator.

21. If you keep your body free from disease and sensual pleasure it will help you to serve what is more noble.

22. He who forsakes all worldly desires sets himself above all worldly distress.

23. He who loves God will certainly love his neighbor as well. Such a person cannot hoard money, but distributes itin a way befitting God, being generous to everyone in need.

24. He who gives alms in imitation of God does not discriminate between the wicked and the virtuous, the just andthe unjust, when providing for men's bodily needs. He gives equally to all according to their need, even thoughhe prefers the virtuous man to the bad man because of the probity of his intention.

25. God, who is by nature good and dispassionate, loves all men equally as His handiwork. But He glorifies thevirtuous man because in his will he is united to God. At the same time, in His goodness He is merciful to thesinner and by chastising him in this life brings him back to the path of virtue. Similarly, a man of good anddispassionate judgment also loves all men equally. He loves the virtuous man because of his nature and theprobity of his intention: and he loves the sinner, too, because of his nature and because in his compassion hepities him for foolishly stumbling in darkness.

26. The state of love may be recognized in the giving of money, and still more in the giving of spiritual counsel andin looking after people in their physical needs.

27. He who has genuinely renounced worldly things, and lovingly and sincerely serves his neighbor, is soon set freefrom every passion and made a partaker of God's love and knowledge.

28. He who has realized love for God in his heart is tireless, as Jeremiah says (cf Jer. 17:16. LXX), in his pursuit ofthe Lord his God, and bears every hardship, reproach and insult nobly, never thinking the least evil of anyone.

29. When you are insulted by someone or iiumiliated, guard against angry thoughts, lest they arouse a feeling ofirritation, and so cut you off from love .and place you in the realm of hatred.

30. You should know that you Save been greatly benefited when you have suffered deeply because of some insultor indignity; for by means of the indignity self-esteem has been driven out of you.

31. Just as the thought of fire does not warm the body, so faith without love does not actualize the light of spiritualknowledge in the soul.

32. Just as the light of the sun attracts a healthy eye, so through love knowledge of God naturally draws to itself thepure intellect.

33. A pure intellect is one divorced from ignorance and illumined by divine light.

34. A pure soul is one freed from passions and constantly delighted by divine love.

35. A culpable passion is an impulse of the soul that is contrary to nature.

36. Dispassion is a peaceful condition of the soul in which the soul is not easily

moved to evil.

37. A man who has been assiduous in acquiring the fruits of love will not cease loving even if he suffers a thousandcalamities. Let Stephen, the disciple of Christ, and others like him persuade you of the truth of this (cf Acts7:60). Our Lord Himself prayed for His murderers and asked the Father to forgive them because they did notknow what they were doing (cf. Luke 23:34).

38. If love is long-suffering and kind (cf. 1 Cor. 13:4), a man who is contentious and malicious clearly alienateshimself from love. And he who is alienated from love is alienated from God, for God is love.

39. Do not say that you are the temple of the Lord, writes Jeremiah (cf. Jer. 7:4); nor should you say that faith alonein our Lord Jesus Christ can save you, for this is impossible unless you also acquire love for Him through yourworks. As for faith by itself, "the devils also believe, and tremble'(Jas. 2:19).

40. We actively manifest love in forbearance and patience towards our neighbor, in genuinely desiring his good,and in the right use of material things.

41. He who loves God neither distresses nor is distressed with anyone on account of transitory things. There is onlyone kind of

distress which he both suffers and inflicts on others: that salutary distress which the blessed Paul suffered and whichhe inflicted on the Corinthians (cf 2 Cor. 7:8-11).

42. He who loves God lives the angelic life on earth, fasting and keeping vigils, praying and singing psalms andalways thinking good of every man.

43. If a man desires something, he makes every effort to attain it. But of all things which are good and desirable thedivine is incomparably the best and the most desirable. How assiduous, then, we should be in order to attainwhat is of its very nature good and desirable.

44. Stop defiling your flesh with shameful deeds and polluting your soul with wicked thoughts; then the peace ofGod will descend upon you and bring you love.

45. Afflict your flesh with hunger and vigils and apply yourself tirelessly to psalmody and prayer; then thesanctifying gift of self-restraint will descend upon you and bring you love.

46. He who has been granted divme knowledge and has through love acquired its illumination will never be swepthither and thither by the demon of self-esteem. But he who has not yet been granted such knowledge willreadily succumb to this demon. However, if in all that he does he keeps his gaze fixed on God, doing everythmgfor His sake, he will with God's help soon escape.

47. He who has not yet attained divme knowledge energized by love is proud of his spiritual progress. But he whohas been granted such knowledge repeats with deep conviction the words uttered by the patriarch Abraham

when he was granted the manifestation of God: 'I am dust and ashes' (Gen. 18:27).

48. The person who fears the Lord has humihty as his constant companion and, through the thoughts whichhumihty inspires, reaches a state of divine love and thankfulness. For he recalls his former worldly way of life,the various sins he has committed and the temptations which have befallen him since his youth: and he recalls,too, how the Lord delivered him from all this, and how He led him away from a passion-dominated life to a liferuled by God. Then, together with fear, he also receives love, and in deep humility continually gives thanks tothe Benefactor and Helmsman of our lives.

49. Do not befoul your intellect by clinging to thoughts filled

with anger and sensual desire. Otherwise you will lose your capacity for pure prayer and fall victim to the demon oflistlessness.

50. When the intellect associates with evil and sordid thoughts it loses its intimate communion with God.

51. The foolish man under attack from the passions, when stirred to anger, is senselessly impelled to leave hisbrethren. But when heated by desire he quickly changes his mind and seeks their company. An intelligentperson behaves differently in both cases. When anger flares up he cuts off the source of disturbance and so freeshimself from his feeling of irritation against his brethren. When desire is uppermost he checks every unrulyimpulse and chance conversation.

52. In time of trial do not leave your monastery but stand up courageously against the thoughts that surge over you,especially those of irritation and listlessness. For when you have been tested by afflictions in this way,accordmg to divine providence, your hope in God will become firm and secure. But if you leave, you will showyourself to be worthless, unmanly and fickle.

53. If you wish not to fall away from the love of God, do not let your brother go to bed feeling irritated with you,and do not go to bed yourself feeling irritated with him. Reconcile yourself with your brother, and then come toChrist with a clear conscience and offer Him your gift of love in earnest prayer (cf Matt. 5:24).

54. St Paul says that, if we have aU the gifts of the Spirit but do not have love, we are no further forward (of. 1 Cor.13:2). How assiduous, then, we ought to be in our efforts to acquire this love.

55. If 'love prevents us from harming our neighbor' (Rom. 13:10). he who is jealous of his brother or irritated byhis reputation, and damages his good name with cheap jibes or in any way spitefully plots against him, is surelyalienating himself from love and is guilty in the face of eternal judgment.

56. If love is the fulfilling of the law' (Rom. 13:10), he who is full of rancor towards his neighbor and lays traps forhim and curses him, exulting in his fall, must surely be a transgressor deserving eternal punishment.

57. If 'he who speaks evil of his brother, and judges his brother, speaks evil of the law, and judges the law' (Jas.4:11), and the law of Christ is love, surely he who speaks evil of Christ's love falls away from it and is thecause of his own perdition.

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58. Do not listen gleefully to gossip at your neighbor's expense or chatter to a person who likes finding fault.Otherwise you will fall away from divine love and find yourself cut off from eternal life.

59. Do not permit any abuse of your spiritual father or encourage anyone who dishonors him. Otherwise the Lordwill be angry with your conduct and will obliterate you from the land of the livmg (cf. Deut. 6:15).

60. Silence the man who utters slander in your hearing. Otherwise you sin twice over: first, you accustom yourselfto this deadly passion and, second you fail to prevent him from gossiping against his neighbor.

61. 'But I say to you," says the Lord, 'love your enemies ... do good to those who hate you, and pray for those whomistreat you' (Matt. 5:44). Why did He command this? To free you from hatred, irritation, anger and rancor,and to make you worthy of the supreme gift of perfect love. And you cannot attain such love if you do notimitate God and love all men equally. For God loves all men equally and wishes them 'to be saved and to cometo the knowledge of the truth' (1 Tim. 2:4).

62. 'But I say to you, do not resist evil; but if someone hits you on the right cheek, turn to him the other cheek aswell. And if anyone sues you in the courts, and takes away your coat, let him have your cloak also. And ifanyone forces you to go a mile, go with him for two miles' (Matt. 5:39-41). Why did He say this? Both to keepyou free from anger and irritation, and to correct the other person by means of your forbearance, so that like agood Father He might bring the two of you under the yoke of love.

63. We carry about with us impassioned images of the things we have experienced. If we can overcome theseimages we shall be indifferent to the thmgs which they represent. For fighting against the thoughts of things ismuch harder than fightmg against the things themselves, just as to sin in the mind is easier than to sin throughoutward action.

64. Some passions pertain to the body, others to the soul. The first are occasioned by the body, the second byexternal objects. Love and self-control overcome both kinds, the first curbing the passions of the soul and thesecond those of the body.

65. Some passions pertain to the soul's incensive power, and

others to its desiring aspect. Both kinds are aroused through the senses. They are aroused when the soul lacks loveand self-control.

66. The passions of the soul's mcensive power are more difficult to combat than those of its desiring aspect.Consequently our Lord has given a stronger remedy against them; the commandment of love.

67. While passions such as forgetfulness and ignorance affect but one of the soul's three aspects - the incensive, thedesiring or the intelligent - listlessness alone seizes control of all the soul's powers and rouses almost all thepassions together. That is why this passion is more serious than all the others. Hence our Lord has given us anexcellent remedy against it, saying: "You will gain possession of your souls through your patient endurance'(Luke 21:19).

68. Never strike any of the brethren, especially without reason, in case he is unable to bear the affliction and leavesthe monastery. For then you would never escape the reproach of your conscience. It would always bring youdistress in the time of prayer and divert your intellect from intimate communion with God.

69. Shun all suspicions and all persons that cause you to take offence. If you are offended by anything, whetherintended or unintended, you do not know the way of peace, which through love brings the lovers of divineknowledge to the knowledge of God.

70. You have not yet acquired perfect love if your regard for people is still swayed by their characters - forexample, if, for some particular reason, you love one person and hate another, or if for the same reason yousometimes love and

sometimes hate the same person.

71. Perfect love does not split up the single human nature, common to all, according to the diverse characteristics ofindividuals; but, fixing attention always on this single nature, it loves all men equally. It loves the good asfriends and the bad as enemies, helping them, exercising forbearance, patiently accepting whatever they do, nottaking the evil into account at all but even suffering on their behalf if the opportunity offers, so that, if possible,they too become friends. If it cannot achieve this, it does not change its own attitude; it continues to show thefruits of love to all men alike. It was on account of this that our Lord and God Jesus Christ, showing His lovefor us, suffered for the whole of mankind and gave to all men an equal hope of resurrection, although each mandetermines his own fitness for glory or punishment.

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72. If you are not indifferent to both fame and dishonor, riches and poverty, pleasure and distress, you have not yetacquired perfect love. For perfect love is indifferent not only to these but even to this fleeting life and to death.

73. Listen to the words of those who have been granted perfect love: 'What can separate us from the love of Christ?Can affliction, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or the sword? As it is written, "ForThy sake we are put to death all the day long; we are regarded as sheep for slaughtering (Ps. 44:22). But in allthese things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, norlife, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, norany other created thing, can separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom. 8:35-39).Those who speak and act thus with regard to divine love are all saints.

74. Listen now to what they say about love for our neighbor: 'I speak the truth in Christ, I do not lie, my conscienceals bears me witness in the Holy Spirit: I have great distress and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wishthat I myself were severed from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, who areIsraelites' (Rom. 9:1-3). Moses and the other

saints speak in a similar manner.

75. He who is not indifferent to fame and pleasure, as well as to the love of riches that exists because of them andincreases them, cannot cut off occasions for anger. And he who does not cut these off cannot attain perfect love.

76. Humility and ascetic hardship free a man from all sin, for the one cuts out the passions of the soul, the otherthose of the body. This is what the blessed David indicates when he prays to God, saying, 'Look on my humilityand my toil, and forgive all my sins' (Ps. 25:18).

77. It is through our fulfilling of the commandments that the Lord makes us dispassionate; and it is through Hisdivme teachings that He gives us the light of spiritual knowledge.

78. All such teachings are concerned either with God, or with things visible and invisible, or eke with theprovidence and judgment relating to them.

79. Almsgiving heals the soul's mcensive power; fasting withers

sensual desire; prayer purifies the intellect and prepares it for the contemplation of created beings. For the Lord hasgiven us commandments which correspond to the powers of the soul.

^0. 'Learn from Me', He said 'for I am gentle and humble in heart" (Matt. 11:29). Gentleness keeps the soul'sincensive power in a calm state; humility frees the intellect from conceit and self-esteem.

11. Fear of God is of two kinds. The first is generated in us by the threat of punishment. It is through such fear thatwe develop in due order self-control, patience, hope in God and dispassion; and it is from dispassion that lovecomes. The second kind of fear is linked with love and constantly produces reverence in the soul, so that it does

not grow indifferent to God because of the intimate communion of its love.

82. The first kind of fear is expeUed by perfect love when the soul has acquired this and is no longer afraid ofpunishment (cf. 1 John 4:18). The second kind, as we have already said, is always found united with perfectlove. The first kind of fear is referred to in the following two verses: 'Out of fear of the Lord men shun eviP(Prov. 16:6), and Tear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (Ps. 111:10). The second kind is mentioned inthe following verses: 'Fear of the Lord is pure, and endures for ever' (Ps. 19:9. LXX), and "Those who fear theLord will not want for anything" (Ps. 34:10. LXX).

83. 'Put to death therefore whatever is earthly in you: unchastity, uncleanliness, passion, evil desire and greed'(Col. 3:5). Earth is the name St Paul gives to the will of the flesh. Unchastity is his word for the actualcommitting of sin. Uncleanness is how he designates assent to sin. Passion is his term for impassioned thoughts.By evil desire he means the simple act of accepting the thought and the desire. And greed is his name for whatgenerates and promotes passion. All these St Paul ordered us to mortify as 'aspects' expressing the will of theflesh.

84. First the memory brings some passion-free thought into the intellect. By its lingering there, passion is aroused.When the passion is not eradicated, it persuades the intellect to assent to it. Once this assent is given, the actualsin is then committed. Therefore, when writing to converts from paganism, St Paul in his wisdom orders themfirst to eliminate the actual sin and then systematically to work back to the cause. The cause, as we have alreadysaid, is

greed, which generates and promotes passion. I think that greed in this case means gluttony, because this is themother and nurse of unchastity. For greed is a sin not only with regard to possessions hut also with regard to food,just as self-control likewise relates to both food and possessions.

85. When a sparrow tied by the leg tries to fly, it is held back by the string and pulled down to the earth. Similarly,when the intellect that has not yet attained

dispassion flies up towards heavenly knowledge, it is held back bythe passions and pulled down to the earth.

86. The intellect, once totally free from passions, proceeds un-distracted to the contemplation of created beings,making its way towards knowledge of the Holy Trinity.

87. When in a pure state, the intellect, on receiving the conceptual images of things, is moved to contemplate thesethings spiritually. But when it is sullied through indolence, while its conceptual images may in general be freefrom passion, those concerned with people produce in it thoughts that are shameful or wicked.

88. When during prayer no conceptual image of anything worldly disturbs your intellect, then know that you arewithin the realm of dispassion.

89. Once the soul starts to feel its own good health, the images in its dreams are also calm and free from passion.

90. Just as the physical eye is attracted to the beauty of things visible, so the purified intellect is attracted to theknowledge of things invisible. By things invisible, I mean things incorporeal.

91. It is already much not to be roused to any passion by material things. It is even more to remain dispassionatewhen presented with mental images of such things. For the war which the demons wage against us by means ofthoughts is more severe than the war they wage by means of material things.

92. He who has succeeded in attaining the virtues and is enriched with spiritual knowledge sees things clearly intheir true nature. Consequently, he both acts and speaks with regard to all things in a manner which is fitting,and he is never deluded. For according to whether we use things rightly or wrongly we become either good orbad.

93. If the conceptual images that continually rise up in the heart are free from passion whether the body is awake orasleep, then we may know that we have attained the highest state of dispassion.

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94. Through fulfilling the commandments the intellect strip itself of the passions. Through spiritual contemplationof things visible it casts off impassioned conceptions of such things. Through knowledge of things invisible it

discards the contemplation of things visible. Finally it denudes itself even of this through knowledge of theHoly Trinity.

95. When the sun rises and casts its light on the world, it reveals both itself and the things it illumines. Similarly,when the Sun of righteousness rises in the pure intellect. He reveals both Himself and the inner principles of allthat has been and will be brought into existence by Him.

96. We do not know God from His essence. We know Him rather from the grandeur of His creation and from Hisprovidential care for all creatures. For through these, as though they were mirrors, we may attain insight intoHis infinite goodness, wisdom and power.

97. The pure intellect is occupied either with passion-free conceptual images of human affairs, or with the naturalcontemplation of things visible or invisible, or with the light of the Holy Trinity.

98. When the intellect is engaged in the contemplation of thmgs visible, it searches out either the natural principlesof these things or the spiritual principles which they reflect, or else it seeks their original cause.

99. When the intellect is absorbed in the contemplation of things invisible, it seeks their natural principles, thecause of their generation and whatever follows from this, as well as the providential order and judgment whichrelates to them.

100. When the intellect is established in God, it at first ardently longs to discover the principles of His essence. ButGod's inmost nature does not admit of such investigation, which is indeed beyond the capacity of everythingcreated. The qualities that appertain to His nature, however, are accessible to the intellect's longing: I mean thequalities of eternity, infinity, mdeterminateness, goodness, wisdom, and the power of creating, preserving andjudging creatures. Yet of these, only infinity may be grasped fully; and the very fact of knowing nothing

isknowledge surpassing the intellect, as the theologians Gregory of Nazianzos and Dionysios have said.

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1. He who truly loves God prays entirely without distraction, and he who prays entirely without distraction loves

God truly. But he whose intellect is fixed on any worldly thing does not pray without distraction, andconsequently he does not love God.

2. The intellect that dallies with some sensible thing clearly is attached to it by some passion, such as desire,irritation, anger or rancor: and unless it becomes detached from that thing it will not be able to free itself fromthe passion affecting it.

3. When passions dominate the intellect, they separate it from God, binding it to material things and preoccupyingit with them. But when love of God dominates the intellect, it frees it from its bonds, persuading it to rise abovenot only sensible things but even this transitory life.

4. The effect of observing the commandments is to free from passion our conceptual images of things. The effectof spiritual reading and contemplation is to detach the intellect from form and matter. It is this which gives riseto undistracted prayer.

5. Unless various successive spiritual contemplations also occupy the intellect, the practice of virtues by itselfcannot free it so entirely from passions that it is able to pray undistractedly. Practice of the virtues frees theintellect only from dissipation and hatred; spiritual contemplation releases it also from forgetfulness and ignor-ance. In this way the intellect can pray as it should.

6. Two states of pure prayer are exalted above all others. One is to be found in those who have not advancedbeyond the practice of the virtues, the other in those leading the contemplative life. The first is engendered inthe soul by fear of God and a firm hope in Him, the second by an intense longing for God and by

totalpurification. The sign of the first is that the intellect, abandoning all conceptual

images of the world, concentrates itself and prays without distraction or disturbance as if God Himself were present,as indeed He is. The sign of the second is that at the very onset of prayer the intellect is so ravished by the divineand infinite light that it is aware neither of itself nor of any other created thing, but only of Him who through lovehas activated such radiance in-it. It is then that, being made aware of God's qualities, it receives clear and distinctreflections of Him.

7. Whatever a man loves he inevitably clings to, and in order not to lose it he rejects everything that keeps himfrom it. So he who loves God cultivates pure prayer, driving out every passion that keeps him from it.

8. He who drives out self-love, the mother of the passions, will with God's help easily rid himself of the rest, suchas anger, irritation, rancor and so on. But he who is dominated by self-love is overpowered by the otherpassions, even against his will. Self-love is the passion of attachment to the body.

9. Men love one another, commendably or reprehensibly, for the following five reasons; either for the sake ofGod, as the virtuous man loves everyone and as the man not yet virtuous loves the virtuous : or by nature, asparents love their children and children their parents: or because of self-esteem, as he who is praised loves theman who praises him: or because of avarice, as with one who loves a rich man for what he can get out of him;or because of self-indulgence, as with the man who serves his belly and his genitals. The first of these iscommendable, the second is of an intermediate kind, the rest are dominated by passion.

10. If there are some men you hate and some you neither love nor hate, and others you love strongly and othersagain you love but moderately, recognize from this inequality that you are far from perfect love. For perfectlove presupposes that you love all men equally.

11. 'Shun evil and do good" (Ps. 34:14), that is to say, fight the enemy in order to diminish the passions, and then bevigilant lest they increase once more. Again, fight to acquire the virtues and then be vigilant in order to keepthem. This is the meaning of "cultivating' and 'keeping' (cf. Gen. 2:15).

12. Those permitted by God to test us either inflame the desiring aspect of the soul, or stir up its mcensive power, ordarken its

intelligence, or envelop its body in pain, or deprive us of bodily necessities.

13. The demons either tempt us themselves or arm against us those who have no fear of the Lord. They tempt usthemselves when we withdraw from human society, as they, tempted our Lord in the desert. They tempt usthrough other people when we spend our time in the company of others, as they tempted our Lord through thePharisees. But whichever line of attack they choose, let us repel them by keeping our gaze fixed on the Lord's

example.

14. When the intellect begins to advance in love for God, the demon of blasphemy starts to tempt it, suggestingthoughts such as no man but only the devil, their father, could invent. He does this out of envy, so that the manof God, in his despair at thinking such thoughts, no longer dares to soar up to God in his accustomed prayer. Butthe demon does not further his own ends by this means. On the contrary, he makes us more steadfast. Forthrough his attacks and our retaliation we grow more experienced and genuine in our love for God. May hissword enter into his own heart and may his bows be broken (cf. Ps. 37:15).

15. When the intellect turns its attention to the visible world, it perceives things through the medium of the sensesin a way that accords with nature. And the intellect is not evil, nor is its natural capacity to form conceptualimages of things, nor are the things themselves, nor are the senses, for all are the work of God. What, then, isevil? Clearly it is the passion that enters into the conceptual images formed in accordance with nature by theintellect: and this need not

happen if the intellect keeps watch.

16. Passion is an impulse of the soul contrary to nature, as in the case of mindless love or mindless hatred forsomeone or for some sensible thing. In the case of love, it may be for needless food, or for a woman, or formoney, or for transient glory, or for other sensible objects or on their account. In the case of hatred, it may befor any of the things mentioned, or for someone on account of these things.

17. Again, vice is the wrong use of our conceptual images of things, which leads us to misuse the thingsthemselves. In relation to women, for example, sexual intercourse, rightly used, has as its purpose the begettingof children. He, therefore, who seeks in it only sensual pleasure uses it wrongly, for he reckons as good what is

not good. When such a man has intercourse with a woman, he misuses her. And the same is true with regard to otherthings and our conceptual images of them.

18. When the demons expel self-restraint from your intellect and besiege you with thoughts of unchastity, turn tothe Lord with tears and say, 'Now they have driven me out and encircled me" (Ps. 17:11. LXX); 'Thou art mysupreme joy: deliver me from those who encircle me' (Ps. 32:7. LXX). Then you will be safe.

19. The demon of unchastity is powerful and violently attacks those who struggle against passion, particularly ifthey are lax about matters of diet and often meet women. With the lubricity of sensual pleasure heimperceptibly steals into the intellect and thereafter persecutes the hesychast by means of the memory, settinghis body on fire and presenting various forms to his intellect. In this way he evokes his assent to sin. If you donot want these forms to linger in you, turn again to fasting, labor, vigils and blessed stillness with intenseprayer.

20. Those who are always trying to lay hold of our soul do so by means of impassioned thoughts, so that they maydrive it to sin either in the mind or in action. Consequently, when they find the intellect unreceptive, they willbe

disgraced and put to shame, and when they find the intellect occupied with spiritual contemplation, they will'be turned back and suddenly ashamed' (Ps. 6:10).

21. He who anoints his intellect for spiritual contest and drives all impassioned thoughts out of it has the quality ofa deacon. He who illuminates his intellect with the knowledge of created beings and utterly destroys falseknowledge has the quality of a priest. And he who perfects his intellect with the holy myrrh of the knowledgeand worship of the Holy Trinity has the quality of a bishop.

22. The demons are weakened when the passions in us decrease through our keeping the commandments, and theyare defeated totally when they are routed by dispassion, for then they no longer find anything through whichthey can enter the soul and fight against it. This is what is meant by 'they will be weakened and defeated beforeThy face' (Ps. 9:3).

23. Some men abstain from the passions because of human fear, others because of self-esteem, and others throughself-control. Some, however, are delivered from the passions by divine providence.

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24. All the discourses of our Lord contain these four elements: commandments, doctrines, threats and promises.With the help of these we patiently accept every kind of hardship, such as fasting, vigils, sleeping on theground, toil and labor in acts of service, insults, dishonor, torture, death and so on. 'Helped by the words of Thylips,' says the psalmist, I have kept to difficult paths' (Ps. 17:4. LXX).

25. The reward of self-control is dispassion, and the reward of faith is spiritual knowledge. Dispassion engendersdiscrimination, and spiritual knowledge engenders love for God.

26. When the intellect practices the virtues correctly, it advances in moral understanding. When it practicescontemplation, it advances in spiritual knowledge. The first leads the spiritual contestant to discriminatebetween virtue and vice; the second leads the participant to the inner qualities of incorporeal and

corporealthings. Finally, the intellect is granted the grace of theology when, carried on wings of love beyond these twoformer stages, it is taken up into God and with the help of the Holy Spirit discerns - as far as this is possible forthe human mtellect - the qualities of God.

27. If you are about to enter the realm of theology, do not seek to descry God's inmost nature, for neither the humanintellect nor that of any other being under God can experience this: but try to discern, as far as possible, thequalities that appertain to His nature - qualities of eternity, infinity, mdeterminateness, goodness, wisdom, andthe power of creating, preserving and judging creatures, and so on. For he who discovers these qualities, tohowever small an extent, is a great theologian.

28. He who combines the practice of the virtues with spiritual knowledge is a man of power. For with the first hewithers his desire and tames his mcensiveness, and with the second he gives wings to his intellect and goes outof himself to God.

29. When our Lord says, 'I and My Father are one" (John 10:30), He indicates their identity of essence. Again,when He says, 'I am in the Father, and the Father in Me' (John 14:11), He shows that the Persons cannot bedivided. The tntheists, therefore, who divide the Son from the Father, find themselves in a dilemma. Either theysay that the Son is coetemal with the Father, but nevertheless

divide Him from the Father, and so they are forced to say that He is not begotten from the Father: thus they fell intothe error of claiming that there are three Gods and three first principles. Or else they say that the Son is begottenfrom the Father but nevertheless divide Him from the Father, and so they are forced to say that He is not coetemalwith the Father; thus they make the Lord of time subject to time. For, as St Gregory of Nazianzos says, it is

necessary both to maintain the one God and to confess the three Persons, each in His own individuality. Accordingto St Gregory, the Divinity is divided but without division and is united but with distinctions. Because of this boththe

division and the union are paradoxical. For what paradox would there be if the Son were united to the Father anddivided from Him only in the same manner as one human being is united to and divided from another, and nothingmore?

30. For him who is perfect in love and has reached the summit of dispassion there is no difference between his ownor another's, or between Christians and unbelievers, or between slave and free, or even between male andfemale. But because he has risen above the tyranny of the passions and has fixed his attention on the singlenature of man, he looks on all in the same way and shows the same disposition to all. For in him there is neitherGreek nor Jew, male nor female, bond nor free, but Christ who 'is all, and in all' (Col. 3:11; cf Gal. 3:28).

31. The passions lymg hidden in the soul provide the demons with the means of arousing impassioned droughts inus. Then, fighting the intellect through these thoughts, they force it to give its assent to sm. When it has beenovercome, they lead it to sin in the mind; and when this has been done they induce it, captive as it is, to committhe sin in action. Having thus desolated the soul by means of these thoughts, the demons then retreat, taking thethoughts with them, and only the specter or idol of sin remains in the intellect. Referring to this our Lord says,'When you see the abominable idol of desolation standing in the holy place (let him who reads understand). . .'(Matt. 24:15). For man's intellect is a holy place and a temple of God in which the demons, having desolatedthe soul by means of impassioned thoughts, set up the idol of sin. That these things have already taken place inhistory no one, I think.

who has read Josephus will doubt; though some say that they will also come to pass in the time of the Antichrist.

32. There are three things that impel us towards what is holy: natural instincts, angelic powers and probity ofintention. Natural instincts impel us when, for example, we do to others what we would wish them to do to us(cf Luke 6:31), or when we see someone suffering deprivation or in need and naturally feel compassion.Angelic powers impel us when, being ourselves impelled to something worthwhile, we find we areprovidentially helped and guided. We are

impelled by probity of intention when, discriminating between goodand evil, we choose the good.

33. There are also three things that impel us towards evil: passions, demons and sinfulness of intention. Passionsimpel us when, for example, we desire somethmg beyond what is reasonable, such as food which is unnecessaryor untimely, or a woman who is not our wife or for a purpose other than procreation, or else when we areexcessively angered or irritated by, for instance, someone who has dishonored or injured us. Demons impel uswhen, for example, they catch us off our guard and suddenly launch a violent attack upon us, stirring up thepassions already mentioned and others of a similar nature. We are impelled by sinfulness of intention when,knowing the good, we choose evil instead.

34. The rewards for the toils of virtue are dispassion and spiritual knowledge. For these are mediators of thekingdom of heaven, just as passions and ignorance are mediators of eternal punishment. It is because of this thathe who seeks these rewards for the sake of human glory and not for their intrinsic goodness is rebuked by thewords of Scripture, 'You ask, and do not receive, because you ask wrongly' (Jas. 4:3).

35. Many human activities, good in themselves, are not good because of the motive for which they are done. Forexample, fasting and vigils, prayer and psalmody, acts of charity and hospitality are by nature good, but whenperformed for the sake of self-esteem they are not good.

36. In everything that we do God searches out our purpose to see whether we do it for Him or for some othermotive.

37. When you hear the words of Scripture, "Thou shalt render to

every man according to his work' (Ps. 62:12. LXX), do not think that God bestows blessings when something isdone for the wrong purpose, even though it seems be good. Quite clearly He bestows blessings only when somethingis done for the right purpose. For God's judgment looks not at the actions but at the

purpose behind them.

38. The malice of the demon of pride takes two forms. Either he persuades the monk to ascribe his achievements to

himself and not to God, the Giver of aU goodness and helper in every achievement; or, if this fails, he suggeststhat he should belittle those of his brethren who are as yet less perfect than himself. Influenced in this way, hedoes not realize that the demon is persuading him to deny God's help. For if he belittles his brethren for theirlack of achievement, he clearly infers that he has achieved something through his own powers. But this isimpossible, since, as our Lord has said, 'Without Me you can do nothing' (John 15:5). For even when impelledtowards what is good, our weakness cannot bring anything to fruition without the Giver of all goodness.

39. The person who has come to know the weakness of human nature has gained experience of divine power. Sucha man, having achieved some things and eager to achieve others through this divine power, never belittlesanyone. For he knows that just as God has helped him and freed him from many passions and difficulties, so,when God wishes. He is able to help all men, especially those pursuing the spiritual way for His sake. And if inHis providence He does not deliver all men together from their passions, yet like a good and loving physicianHe heals with individual treatment each of those who are trying to make progress.

40. We grow proud when the passions cease to be active in us, and this whether they are inactive because theircauses have been eradicated or because the demons have deliberately withdrawn in order to deceive us.

41. Almost every sin is committed for the sake of sensual pleasure; and sensual pleasure is overcome by hardshipand distress arising either voluntarily from repentance, or else involuntarily as a result of some salutary andprovidential reversal. "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged, weare chastened by the Lord, so that we should not be condemned with the world' (1 Cor. 11:31 -32).

42. When a trial comes upon you unexpectedly, do not blame

the person through whom it came but try to discover the reason why it came, and then you will find a way of dealingwith it. For whether through this person or through someone else you had in any case to drink the wormwood ofGod's judgments.

43. As long as you have bad habits do not reject hardship, so that through it you may be humbled and eject yourpride.

44. Sometimes men are tested by pleasure, sometimes by distress or by physical suffering. By means of Hisprescriptions the Physician of souls administers the remedy according to the cause of the passions lying hiddenin the soul.

45. Trials are sent to some so as to take away past sins, to others so as to eradicate sins now being committed, andto yet others so as to forestall sins which may be committed in the future. These are distinct from the trials thatarise in order to test men in the way that Job was tested.

46. The sensible man, taking into account the remedial effect of the divine prescriptions, gladly bears the sufferingswhich they bring upon him, since he is aware that they have no cause other than his own sin. But when the fool,ignorant of the supreme wisdom of God's providence, sins and is corrected, he regards either God or men asresponsible for the hardships he suffers.

47. Certain things stop the movement of the passions and do not allow them to grow; others subdue them and makethem diminish. For instance, where desire is concerned, fasting, labor and vigils do not allow it to grow, whilewithdrawal, contemplation, prayer and intense longing for God subdue it and make it disappear. The same istrue with regard to anger. Forbearance, freedom from rancor, gentleness, for example, all arrest it and prevent itfrom growing, while love, acts of charity, kindness and compassion make it diminish.

48. When a man's intellect is constantly with God, his desire grows beyond all measure into an intense longing forGod and his incensiveness is completely transformed into divine love. For by continual participation in thedivine radiance his intellect becomes totally filled with light; and when it has reintegrated its passible aspect, itredirects this aspect towards God, as we have said, filling it

with an incomprehensible and intense longing forHim and with unceasing love, thus drawing it entirely away from worldly things to the divine.

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49. If a man is not envious or angry, and does not bear a grudge against someone who has offended him, that doesnot necessarily mean that he loves him. For, while still lacking love, he may be capable of not repaying evilwith evil, in accordance with the commandment (cf Rom. 12:17), and yet by no means be capable of renderinggood for evil without forcing himself To be spontaneously disposed to 'do good to those who you hate you'

(Matt. 5:44) belongs to perfect spiritual love alone.

50. If a man does not love someone, it does not necessarily mean that he hates him: and conversely, if he does nothate him, it does not necessarily mean that he loves him, since he can be neutral towards him, that is, neitherlove him nor hate him. For the disposition to love is created only in the five ways listed in the ninth text of thisCentury, one commendable, one of an intermediate kind, and three reprehensible.

51. When you find your intellect occupied pleasurably with material things and becoming fondly attached to itsconceptual images of them, you may be sure that you love these things more than God. 'For where your treasureis, there will your heart be also' (Matt. 6:21).

52. The intellect joined to God for long periods through prayer and love becomes wise, good, powerful,compassionate, merciful and long-suffering; in short, it includes within itself almost all the divine qualities. Butwhen the intellect withdraws from God and attaches itself to material things, either it becomes self-indulgentlike some domestic animal, or like a wild beast it fights with men for the sake of these things.

53. Scripture calls material things 'the world'': and worldly men are those who occupy their intellect with thesethings. It is such men that Scripture rebukes when it says: 'Do not love the world or the things that are in theworld . . . The

desire of the flesh, and the desire of the eyes, and pride in one's possessions, are not of God butof the world' (cf 1 John 2:15-16).

54. A monk is a man who has freed his intellect from attachment to material things and by means of self-control,love, psalmody and prayer cleaves to God.

55. The herdsman signifies the man practicing the virtues, for moral achievements may be represented bycattle. That is why Jacob said, 'Your servants are herdsmen' (Gen. 46:34). The

shepherd signifies the gnostic, for sheep represent thoughts pastured by the intellect on the mountains ofcontemplation. That is why 'every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians' (Gen. 46:34), that is, to the demonicpowers.

56. When the body is urged by the senses to indulge its own desires and pleasures, the corrupted intellect readilysuccumbs and assents to its impassioned fantasies and impulses. But the regenerated intellect exercises self-control and withholds itself from them. Moreover, as a true philosopher it studies how to rectify such impulses.

57. There are virtues of the body and virtues of the soul. Those of the body include fasting, vigils, sleeping on theground, ministering to people's needs, working with one's hands so as not to be a burden or in order to give toothers (cf 1 Thess. 2:9, Ephes. 4:28). Those of the soul include love, long-suffering, gentleness, self-control andprayer (cf. Gal, 5:22). If as a result of some constraint or bodily condition, such as illness or the like, we find wecannot practice the bodily virtues mentioned above, we are forgiven by the Lord because He knows the reasons.But if we fail to practice the virtues of the soul, we shall not have a single excuse, for it is always within ourpower to practice them.

58. Love for God leads him who shares in it to be indifferent to every transient pleasure and every labor anddistress. Let all the saints, who have suffered joyfully so much for Christ, convince you of this.

59. Guard yourself from that mother of vices, self-love, which is mindless love for the body. For it gives birth withspecious justification to the three first and most general of the impassioned thoughts. I mean those of gluttony,avarice and self-esteem, which take as their pretext some so-called need of the body. All further vices aregenerated by these three. You must therefore be on your guard, as we have already said, and fight against self-love with great vigilance. For when this vice is eradicated, all the others are eradicated too.

60. The passion of self-love suggests to the monk that he should have pity on his body and in the name of its propercare and governance should take food more often than is fitting; for in this way self-love will lead him on stepby step to fall into the pit of self-indulgence. On the other hand, self-love prompts those who are not monks tofulfill the body's desires at once.

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61. It is said that the highest state of prayer is reached when the intellect goes beyond the flesh and the World, andwhile praying is utterly free from matter and form. He who maintains this state has truly attained unceasingprayer.

62. When the body dies, it is whoUy separated from the things of this world. Similarly, when the intellect dies whilein that supreme state of prayer, it is separated from all conceptual images of this world. If it does not die such adeath, it cannot be with God and live with Him.

63. Let no one deceive you, monk, with the notion that you can be saved while a slave to sensual pleasure and self-esteem.

64. When the body sins through material things, it has the bodily virtues to teach it self-restraint. Similarly, whenthe intellect sins through impassioned conceptual images, it has the virtues of the soul to instruct it, so that byseeing things in a pure and dispassionate way, it too may learn self-restraint.

65. Just as night follows day and winter summer, so distress and pain follow self-esteem and sensual pleasure,either in this life or after death.

66. No sinner can escape future judgment without experiencing in this life either voluntary hardships or afflictionshe has not chosen.

67. There are said to be five reasons why God allows us to be assailed by demons. The first is so that, by attackingand counterattacking, we should learn to discriminate between virtue and vice. The second is so that, havingacquired virtue through conflict and toil, we should keep it secure and immutable. The third is so that, whenmaking progress in virtue, we should not become haughty but learn humility. The fourth is so that, havinggained some experience of evil, we should 'hate it with perfect hatred' (cf Ps. 139:22). The fifth and mostimportant is so that, having achieved dispassion, we should forget neither our own weakness nor the power ofHim who has helped us.

68. Just as the intellect of a hungry man imagines bread and that of a thirsty man water, so the intellect of a gluttonimagines a profusion of foods, that of a sensualist the forms of women, that of a vain man worldly honor, that ofan avaricious man financial gain, that of a rancorous man revenge on whoever has offended him, that of anenvious man how to harm the object of his envy, and so on with all the other passions. For an intellect agitatedby passions is beset by

impassioned conceptual images whether the body is awake or asleep.

69. When desire grows strong, the intellect in sleep imagines things that give sensual pleasure; and when theincensive power grows strong, it imagines things that cause fear. For the impure demons, finding an ally m ournegligence, strengthen and excite the passions. But holy angels, by inducing us to perform works of virtue,make them weaker.

70. When the desiring aspect of the soul is frequently excited, it implants in the soul a habit of self-indulgencewhich is difficult to break. When the soul's incensive power is constantly stimulated, it becomes in the endcowardly and unmanly. The first of these failings is cured by long exercise in fasting, vigils and prayer; thesecond by kindness, compassion, love and mercy.

71. The demons fight against us either through things themselves or through our impassioned conceptual images ofthese things. They fight through things against those who are occupied with things and through conceptualimages against those who are not attached to things.

72. Just as it is easier to sin in the mind than in action, so warfare through our impassioned conceptual images ofthings is harder than warfare through the things themselves,

73. Things are outside the intellect, but the conceptual images of these things are formed within it. It isconsequently in the intellect's power to make good or bad use of these conceptual images. Their wrong use isfollowed by the misuse of the things themselves.

74. The intellect receives impassioned conceptual images in three ways: through the senses, through the body'scondition and through the memory. It receives them through the senses when the senses themseh'es receiveimpressions from things in relation to which we have acquired passion, and when these things stir upimpassioned thoughts in the intellect; through the body's condition when, as a result either of an undisciplinedway of life, or of the activity of demons, or of some illness, the balance of elements in the body is disturbed andagain the intellect is stirred to impassioned thoughts or to thoughts contrary to providence; through the memorywhen the memory recalls the conceptual images of things in relation to which we were once made passionate,and so stirs up impassioned thoughts in a similar way.

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75. Some of the things given to us by God for our use are in the soul, others are in the body and others relate to thebody. In the soul are its powers: in the body are the sense organs and other members; relating to the body arefood, money, possessions and so on. Our good or bad use of these things given us by God, or of what is con-tingent upon them, reveals whether we are virtuous or evil.

76. Of the things contingent upon those given us by God, some are in the soul, some are in the body, and somerelate to the body. Those in the soul are spiritual

knowledge and ignorance, forgetful-ness and memory, loveand hate, fear and courage, distress and joy, and so on. Those in the body are pleasure and pain, sensation andnumbness, health and disease, life and death, and so on. Those relating to the body are having children and nothaving children, wealth and poverty, fame and obscurity, and so on. Some of these are regarded as good andothers as evil. Not one of them is evil in itself. According to how they are used they may rightly be called goodor evil.

77. Both spiritual knowledge and health are good by nature, yet their contraries have been of more benefit to manypeople. For such knowledge may serve no good purpose where the wicked are concerned, even though, as wehave said, it is good in itself The same is true with regard to health, riches and joy, for they are not usedadvantageously by such people. But certainly their contraries do benefit them. Therefore not one of them is evilin itself, even though it may appear to be evil.

78. Do not misuse your conceptual images of things, lest you are forced to make a wrong use of the thingsthemselves. For if a man does not first sin in his mind, he will never sin in action.

79. The principal vices - stupidity, cowardice, licentiousness, injustice - are the 'image' of the 'earthy' man. Theprincipal virtues - intelligence, courage, self-restramt, justice - are the 'image' of the 'heavenly' man. As wehave borne the image of the earthy, let us also bear the image of the heavenly (cf 1 Cor. 15:49).

80. If you wish to find the way that leads to life, look for it in the Way who says, "I am the way, the door, the truthand the life' (John 10:7: 14:6), and there you will find it. Only let your search be diligent and painstaking, for'few there are that find it" (Matt. 7:14) and if you are not among the few you will find yourself with the many.

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81, Five things make a soul cut itself off from sin: fear of judgment, hope of future reward, love of God and, lastly,the prompting of conscience.

82. Some say that there would be no evil in the created world unless there were some power outside this worlddragging us towards evil. But this so-called power is in fact our neglect of the natural energies of the intellect.For those who nurture these energies always do good, never evil. If this, then, is what you too wish to do, get ridof negligence and you will also drive out evil, which is the wrong use of our conceptual images of things,followed by the wrong use of the things themselves.

83. In its natural state, the human intelligence is subject to the divine intelligence and itself rules over the non-intelligent element in us. Let this order be maintained in all things, and there will be no evil among creatures noranything which draws us towards evil.

84. Some thoughts are simple, others are composite. Thoughts which are not impassioned are simple. Passion-charged thoughts are composite, consisting as they do of a conceptual image combined with passion. This beingso, when composite thoughts begin to provoke a sinful idea in the mind, many simple thoughts may be seen tofollow them. For instance, an impassioned thought about gold rises in someone's mind. He has the urgementally to steal the gold and commits the sin in his intellect. Then thoughts of the purse, the chest, the roomand so on follow hard on the thought of the gold. The thought of the gold was composite - for it was combinedwith passion - but those of the purse, the chest and so on were simple: for the intellect had no passion in relationto these things. And the same is true for every thought - thoughts of self-esteem, women and so on. For not allthoughts which follow impassioned thought are themselves impassioned, as our example has shown. From this,then, we may know which conceptual images are impassioned and which are not.

85. Some say that the demons first touch the genitals during sleep and so arouse the passion of unchastity. Oncearoused, the passion, by means of the memory, brings the form of a woman into the intellect. But others say thatthe demons appear first to the intellect in the guise of a woman and then excite the appetite by touching thegenitals and so fantasies arise. Yet others say that the passion dominant in the approaching demon stirs thecorresponding

passion m us, and thus the soul is incited to sinful thoughts and brings these female forms mto the intellect by meansof the memory. The same is true with regard to other impassioned fantasies. Some say they happen in one way,others in another. However, if love and self-control are present in the soul, the demons have no power to arouse anypassion at all in any of the ways described, whether the body is awake or asleep.

86. Some commandments of the Mosaic Law must be kept both physically and spiritually, others only spiritually.For example, 'You shall not commit adultery, you shall not kill, you shall not steal' (Exod. 20:13-15) and so onmust be kept both physically and spiritually (the spiritual observance is threefold, as explained below). To becircumcised (cf Lev. 12: 3), to keep the Sabbath (cf Exod. 31:13), and to slaughter the lamb and eatunleavened bread with bitter herbs (cf Exod. 12:8; 23:15) and similar injunctions are to be kept only spiritually.

87. There are three main inner states characterizing the life of the monk. The first consists in not sinning in actions;the second in not allowing the soul to dally with impassioned thoughts; the third in being able to contemplatedispassionately in the mind the forms of women and of those who have given one offence.

88. A man who is truly without possessions is one who has renounced all his worldly goods and has absolutelynothing on earth except his body; and who, breaking his attachment to the body, has entrusted himself to thecare of God and of the devout.

89. Some people with possessions possess them dispassionately, and so when deprived of them they are notdismayed but are like those who accepted the seizure of their goods with joy (cf. Heb. 10:34). Others possesswith passion, so that when they are in danger of being dispossessed they become utterly dejected, like the richman in the Gospel who went away full of sorrow (cf. Matt. 19:22); and if they actually are dispossessed, theyremain dejected until they die. Dispossession, then, reveals whether a man's inner state is dispassionate ordominated by passion.

90. The demons attack the person who has attained the summits of prayer in order to prevent his conceptual imagesof sensible things from bemg free from passion; they attack the gnostic so that he will dally with impassionedthoughts;

and they attack the person who has not advanced beyond the practice of the virtues so as to persuade

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him to sin through his actions.. They contend with aU men by every possible means in order to separate them fromGod.

91. Those whom divine providence is leading towards holiness in this life are tested by the following three tests: bythe gift of agreeable things, such as health, beauty, fine children, money, fame and so on; by afflictions causingdistress, such as the loss of children, money and fame: and by bodily sufferings, such as disease, torture and soon. To those in the first category the Lord says, "If a person does not forsake all that he has, he cannot be Mydisciple" (Luke 14:33); and to those in the second and third He says, "You will gain possession of your soulsthrough your patient endurance" (Luke 21: 19).

92. The following four things are said to change the body's temperament and through it to produce eitherimpassioned or dispassionate thoughts in the intellect: angels, demons, the winds and diet. It is said that angelschange it by thought, demons by touch, the winds by varying, and diet by the quality of our food and drink andby whether we eat too much or too little. There are also changes brought about by means of memory, hearingand sight - namely when the soul is affected by joyful or distressing experiences as a result of one of these threemeans, and then changes the body's temperament. Thus changed, this temperament in its turn inducescorresponding thoughts in the intellect.

93. Death in the true sense is separation from God, and "the sting of death is sin" (1 Cor. 15:56). Adam, whoreceived the sting, became at the same time an exile from the tree of life, from paradise and from God (cf Gen.3); and this was necessarily followed by the body's death. Life, in the true sense, is He who said, "1 am the life'(John 11:25), and who, having entered into death, led back to life him who had died.

94. A man writes either to assist his memory, or to help others, or for both reasons; or else he writes in order toinjure certain people, or to show off, or out

of necessity.

95. In Psalm 23, 'green pasture' represents the practice of the virtues; 'water of refreshment'', spiritual knowledgeof created things.

96. 'The shadow of death' is human hfe. Therefore if a man is with God and God is with him, clearly he is able tosay, "Though I walk through the midst of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me'.

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97. A pure intellect sees things correctly. A trained intelligence puts them in order. A keen hearing takes in what issaid. He who is lacking in these three qualities insults the person who has spoken.

98. He who knows the Holy Trinity, the Trinity's creation, and providence, and who has brought his soul's passibleaspect into a state of dispassion, is with God.

99. Again in Psalm 23 'the rod'' is said to signify God's judgment and 'the staff His providence. So he who hasreceived spiritual knowledge of these things is able to say, "Thy rod and Thy staff have comforted me.'

100. When the intellect is stripped of passions and illuminated with the contemplation of created beings, then it canenter into God and pray as it should.

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1. An intelligent use of conceptual images and their corresponding physical objects produces self-restraint,love and spiritual knowledge; an unintelligent use produces licentiousness, hatred and ignorance.

2. "You have prepared a table before me . . .' (Ps. 23:5). In this passage, "table'

stands for the practice of thevirtues, for this has been prepared for us by Christ to use 'against those who afflict' us. The 'oil' anointingthe intellect is the contemplation of created things. The 'cup' of God is the knowledge of God. His "mercy'

is His divine Logos. For through His incarnation the Logos pursues us 'all the days' until He overtakes allthose who are to be saved, as He did in the case of Paul (cf. Phil. 3:12). The "house" is the kingdom inwhich all the saints will dwell. "Length of days' means eternal life.

3. When we misuse the soul's powers their evil aspects dominate us. For instance, misuse of our power ofintelligence results in ignorance and stupidity; misuse of our mcensive power and of our desire produceshatred and licentiousness. The proper use of these powers produces spiritual knowledge, moral judgment,love and self-restraint. This being so, nothing created and given existence by God is evil.

4. It is not food that is evil but gluttony, not the begetting of children but unchastity, not material things butavarice, not esteem but self-esteem. This being so, it is only the misuse of things that is evil, and suchmisuse occurs when the intellect fails to cultivate its natural powers.

5. Among the demons, says the blessed Dionysios, evil takes the form of mindless anger, desire uncontrolledby the intellect, and

impetuous imagination. But mindlessness, lack of intellectual control and impetuosity in intelligent beings areprivations of intelligence, intellect and circumspection. But a privation is posterior to the possession of something.There was a time, then, when the demons possessed intelligence, intellect and devout circumspection. This being thecase, not even the demons are evil by nature, but they have become evil through the misuse of their natural powers.

6. Some of the passions produce licentiousness, some hatred, while others produce both dissipation andhatred.

7. Overeating and gluttony cause licentiousness. Avarice and self-esteem cause one to hate one's neighbor.Self-love, the mother of vices, is the cause of all these things.

8. Self-love is an impassioned, mindless love for one's body. Its opposite is love and self-control. A mandominated by self-love is dominated by all the passions.

9. 'No man has ever hated his own flesh', says the Apostle (Eph. 5:29), but he disciplines it and makes it hisservant (cf. 1 Cor. 9:27), allowing it nothing but food and clothing (cf. 1 Tim. 6:8), and then only what Isnecessary for life. In this way a man loves his flesh dispassionately and nourishes it and cares for it as aservant of divine things, supplying it only with what meets its basic needs.

10. If a man loves someone, he naturally makes every effort to be of service to that person. If, then, a manloves God, he naturally strives to conform to His will. But if he loves the flesh, he panders to the flesh.

11. Love, self-restraint, contemplation and prayer accord with God's will, while gluttony, licentiousness andthings that increase them pander to the flesh. That is why "they that are in the flesh cannot conform toGod's will' (Rom. 8:8). But "they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh together with the passions anddesires' (Gal. 5:24).

12. If the intellect inclines to God, it treats the body as its servant and provides it with no more than it needs tosustain life. But if it inclines to the flesh, it becomes the servant of the passions and is always thinkingabout how to fulfill its desires.

13. If you wish to master your thoughts, concentrate on the passions and you will easily drive the thoughtsarising from them out of your intellect. With regard to unchastity, for instance, fast and keep vigils, laborand avoid meeting people. With regard to anger

and resentment, be indifferent to fame, dishonor and material things. With regard to rancor, pray for him who hasoffended you and you will be delivered.

14. Do not compare yourself with weaker men but rather apply yourself to fulfilling the commandment of love.For by comparing yourself with the weak you will fall into the pit of conceit, but by applying yourself tothe commandment of love you will reach the height of humility.

15. It you totally fulfill the command to love your neighbor, you will feel no bitterness or resentment againsthim whatever he does. If this is not the case, then the reason why you fight against your brother is clearlybecause you seek after transitory things and prefer them to the commandment of love.

16. It is not so much because of need that gold has become an object of desire among men, as because of thepower it gives most people to indulge in sensual pleasure.

17. There are three things which produce love of material wealth: self-indulgence, self-esteem and lack of faith.Lack of faith is more dangerous than the other two.

18. The self-indulgent person loves wealth because it enables him to live comfortably; the person full of self-esteem loves it because through it he can gain the esteem of others: the person who lacks faith loves itbecause, fearful of starvation, old age, disease, or exile, he can save it and hoard it. He puts his trust inwealth rather than in God, the Creator who provides for all creation, down to the least of living things.

19. There are four kinds of men who hoard wealth: the three already mentioned and the treasurer or bursar.Clearly, it is only the last who conserves it for a good purpose - namely, so as always to have the means ofsupplying each person's basic needs.

20. All impassioned thoughts either stimulate the soul's desiring power, or disturb its incensive power, ordarken its intelligence. It is in this way that the intellect's capacity for spiritual contemplation and for theecstasy of prayer is dulled. And for this reason a monk, especially the hesychast, must pay close attention tosuch thoughts, searching out and eliminating their causes. For example, the soul's power of desire isstimulated by impassioned thoughts of women. Such thoughts are caused by intemperance in eating anddrinking, and by frequent and senseless talk with the women in question; and

they are cut off by hunger, thirst, vigils and withdrawal from human society. Again, the incensive power is disturbedby impassioned thoughts about those who have offended us. This is caused by self-indulgence, self-esteem and love

of material things. For it is on account of such vices that the passion-dominated man feels resentment, beingfrustrated or otherwise failmg to attain what he wants. These thoughts are cut off when the vices provoking them arerejected .and nullified through the love of God.

21. God knows Himself and He knows the things He has created. The angelic powers, too, know God and know thethings He has created. But they do not know God and the things He has created in the same way that Godknows Himself and the things He has created.

22. God knows Himself through knowing His blessed essence. And the things created by Him He knows throughknowing His wisdom, by means of which and in which He made all things. But the angelic powers know Godby participation, though God Himself transcends such participation; and the things He has created they know byapprehending that which may be spiritually contemplated m them.

23. Although the intellect apprehends its vision of created things within itself, they are actually outside it. This isnot the case with respect to God's knowledge of Created things, for He is eternal, infinite and undetermined,and has bestowed on everything that exists its being, well-being and eternal being.

24. Natures endowed with intelligence and intellect participate in God through their very being, through theircapacity for well-being, that is for goodness and wisdom, and through the grace that gives them eternal being.This, then, is how they know God. They know God's creation, as we have said, by apprehending the har-monious wisdom to be contemplated in it. This wisdom is apprehended by the intellect in a non-material way,and has no independent existence of its own.

25. When God brought into being natures endowed with intelligence and intellect He communicated to them, in Hissupreme goodness, four of the divine attributes by which He sustains, protects and preserves created things.These

attributes are being, eternal being, goodness and wisdom. Of the four He granted the first two, being andeternal being, to their essence, and the second two, goodness and wisdom, to their volitive faculty, so that whatHe is in

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His essence the creature may become by participation. This is why man is said to have been created in the image andhkeness of God (cf Gen. 1:26). He is made in the image of God, since his being is in the image of God's being, andhis eternal being is in the image of God's eternal being (in the sense that, though not without origin, it isnevertheless without end). He is also made in the likeness of God, since he is good in the likeness of God'sgoodness, and wise in the likeness of God's wisdom, God being good and wise by nature, and man by grace. Everyintelligent nature is in the image of God, but only the good and the wise attain His likeness.

26. All beings endowed with intelligence and intellect are either angelic or human. All angelic beings may besubdivided further into two general moral categories or classes, the holy and the accursed — that is, the holypowers and the impure demons. All human beings may also be divided into two moral categories only, thegodly and the ungodly.

27. Since God is absolute existence, absolute goodness and absolute wisdom, or rather, to put it more exactly, sinceGod is beyond all such things, there is nothing whatsoever that is opposite to Him. Creatures, on the other hand,all exist through participation and grace, while those endowed with intelligence and intellect also have acapacity for goodness and wisdom. Hence they do have opposites. As the opposite to existence they have non-existence, and as the opposite to the capacity for goodness and wisdom they have evil and ignorance. Whetheror not they are to exist eternally lies Within the power of their Maker. But whether or not intelligent creaturesare to participate in His goodness and wisdom depends on their own will.

28. The ancient Greek philosophers say that the being of created things has coexisted with God from all eternity andthat God has only given it its qualities. They say that this being itself has no opposite, and that opposition liesonly in the

qualities. But we maintain that only the divine essence has no opposite, since it is eternal and infiniteand bestows eternity on other things. The being of created things, on the other hand, has non-being as itsopposite. Whether or not it exists eternally depends on the power of Him who alone exists in a substantivesense. But since 'the gifts of God are irrevocable" (Rom. 11:29), the being of created things always is andalways will be sustained by His almighty power, even though it

has, as we said, an opposite; for it has been brought into being from non-being, and whether or not it exists dependson the wiU of God.

29. Just as evil is a privation of good, and ignorance a privation of knowledge, so non-being is a privation of being -not of being in a substantive sense, for that does not have any opposite, but of being that exists by participationin substantive being. The first two privations mentioned depend on the will of creatures; the third lies in the willof the Maker, who in His goodness wills beings always to exist and always to receive His blessings.

30. All creatures are either endowed with intelligence and intellect, and thus possess a capacity for opposites suchas virtue and vice, knowledge and ignorance; or else they are physical bodies of various kinds made up ofopposites, that is, of earth, air, fire and water. The former are altogether incorporeal and immaterial, althoughsome of them are joined to bodies; the latter are composed of matter and form.

31. By nature all bodies lack a capacity for motion; they are given motion by the soul, either by one that isintelligent, or by one without intelligence, or by one that is insensate, as the case may be.

32. The soul has three powers: first, the power of nourishment and growth; second, that of imagination and instinct;third, that of intelligence and intellect. Plants share only in the first of these powers; animals share in the firstand second; men share in all three. The first two powers are perishable; the third is clearly imperishable andimmortal.

33. In communicating illumination to each other, the angelic powers also communicate either their virtue or theirknowledge to human nature. As regards their virtue, they communicate a goodness which imitates the goodnessof God, and through this goodness they confer blessings on themselves, on one another and on their inferiors,thus making them like God. As regards their knowledge, they communicate either a more sublime knowledgeabout God - for, as Scripture says, 'Thou, Lord, art most high for evermore' (Ps. 92:8) - or a more profoundknowledge about embodied beings, or one that is more exact about incorporeal beings, or more distinct aboutdivine providence, or more precise about divine judgment.

34. Impurity of intellect consists first in having false knowledge;

secondly in being ignorant of any of the universals (I refer to the human intellect, for it is a property of theangelic intellect not to be

ignorant even of particulars): thirdly in having impassioned thoughts: and fourthly in assenting to sin.

35. Impurity of soul lies in its not functioning in accordance with nature. It is because of this that impassionedthoughts are produced in the intellect. The soul functions in accordance with nature when its passible aspects -that is, its incensive power and its desire - remain dispassionate in the face of provocations both from things andfrom the conceptual images of these things.

36. Impurity of body consists in the actual committing of sin.

37. He who is not attracted by worldly things cherishes stillness. He who loves nothing merely human loves allmen. And he who takes no offence at anyone either on account of their faults, or on account of his ownsuspicious thoughts, has knowledge of God and of things divine.

38. It is a great achievement not to be attracted by things. But it is a far greater achievement to remain dispassionatein the face both of things and of the

conceptual images we derive from them.

39. Love and self-control keep the intellect dispassionate in the face both of things and of the conceptual images weform of them.

40. The intellect of a man who enjoys the love of God does not fight against things or against conceptual images ofthem. It battles against the passions which are linked with these images. It does not, for example, fight against awoman, or against a man who has offended it, or even against the images it forms of them: but it fights againstthe passions which are linked with the images.

41. The whole purpose of the monk's warfare against the demons is to separate the passions from conceptualimages. Otherwise he will not be able to look on things dispassionately.

42. A thing, a conceptual image and a passion are all quite different one from the other. For example, a man, awoman, gold and so forth are things: a conceptual image is a passion-free thought of one of these things: a

passion is mindless affection or indiscriminate hatred for one of these same things. The monk's battle istherefore against passion.

43. An impassioned conceptual image is a thought compounded of passion and a conceptual image. If we separatethe passion from the conceptual image, what remains is the passion-free thought. We can make this separationby means of spiritual love and self-control, if only we have the will.

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44. The virtues separate the intellect from the passions; spiritual contemplation separates it from its passion-freeconceptual images of things: pure prayer brings it into the presence of God Himself.

45. The virtues exist for the sake of the knowledge of creatures;

knowledge for the sake of the knower; the knower, for the sake of Him who is

known through unknowing andwho knows beyond all knowledge.

46. God, full beyond all fullness, brought creatures into being not because He had need of anything, but so that theymight participate in Him in proportion to their capacity and that He Himself might rejoice in His works (cf Ps.104:31), through seeing them joyful and ever filled to overflowing with His inexhaustible gifts.

47. There are many people in the world who are poor in spirit, but not in the way that they should be: there aremany who mourn, but for some financial loss or the death of their children: many are gentle, but towardsunclean passions: many hunger and thirst, but only to seize what does not belong to them and to profit from in-justice : many are merciful, but towards their bodies and the things that serve the body: many are pure in heart,but for the sake of self-esteem; many are peace-makers, but by making the soul submit to the flesh: many arepersecuted, but as wrongdoers: many are reviled, but for shameful sins. Only those are blessed who do or sufferthese things for the sake of Christ and after His example. Why? Because theirs is the kingdom of heaven, andthey shall see God (cf. Matt. 5:3-12). It is not because they do or suffer these things that they are blessed, forthose of whom we have spoken above do the same; it is because they do them and suffer them for the sake of

Christ and after His example.

48. As has been said many times, in everything we do God examines our motive, to see whether we are doing it forHis sake or for some other purpose. Thus when we desire to do something good, we should not do it for the sakeof popularity: we should have God as our goal, so that, with our gaze always fixed on Him, we may doeverything for His sake. Otherwise we shall undergo all the trouble of performing the act and yet lose thereward.

49. In time of prayer clear your intellect of both the passion-free conceptual images of human things and thecontemplation of creatures. Otherwise in imagining lesser things you may fall away from Him who isincomparably greater than all created beings.

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50. Through genuine love for God we can drive out the passions. Love for God is this: to choose Him rather thanthe world, and the soul rather than the flesh, by despising the things of this world and by devoting ourselvesconstantly to Him through self-control, love, prayer, psalmody and so on.

51. If we persistently devote ourselves to God and keep a careful watch on the soul's passible aspect, we are nolonger driven headlong by the provocations of our thoughts. On the contrary, as we acquire a more exactunderstanding of their causes and cut them off, we become more discerning. In this way the following wordscome to apply to us: "My eye also sees my enemies, and my ear shall hear the wicked that rise up against me'(Ps. 92:11. LXX).

52. When you see that your intellect reflects upon its conceptual images of the world with reverence and justice,you may be sure that your body, too, continues to be pure and sinless. But when you see that your intellect isoccupied with thoughts of sin, and you do not check it, you may be sure that before very long your body, too,will fall into those sins.

53. As the world of the body consists of things, so the world of the intellect consists of conceptual images. And as

the body fornicates with the body of a woman, so the inteUect, forming a picture of its own body, fornicateswith the conceptual image of a woman. For in the mind it sees the form of its own body having intercourse withthe form of a woman. Similarly, through the form of its own body, it mentally attacks the form of someone whohas given it offence. The same is true with respect to other sins. For what the body acts out in the world ofthings, the intellect also acts out in the world of conceptual images.

54. One should not be startled or astonished because God the Father judges no one but has given all judgment to theSon (cf John 5:22). The Son teaches us, "Do not judge, so that you may not be judged' (Matt. 7:1); 'Do notcondemn, so that you may not be condemned' (Luke 6:37). St Paul likewise says, 'Judge nothing before thetime, until the Lord comes' (1 Cor. 4:5); and 'By judging another you condemn yourself (Rom. 2:1). But menhave given up weeping for their own sins and have taken judgment away from the Son. They themselves judgeand condemn one another as if they were sinless. "Heaven was amazed at

this' (Jer. 2:12. LXX) and earthshuddered, but men in their obduracy are not ashamed.

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55. He who busies himself with the sins of others, or judges his brother on suspicion, has not yet even begun torepent or to examine himself so as to discover his own sins, which are truly heavier than a great lump of lead;nor does he know why a man becomes heavy-hearted when he loves vanity and chases after falsehood (cf Ps.4:1). That is why, like a fool who walks in darkness, he no longer attends to his own sins but lets hisimagination dwell on the sins of others, whether these sins are real or merely the products of his own suspiciousmind.

56. Self-love, as has often been said, is the cause of all impassioned thoughts. For from it are produced the threeprincipal thoughts of desire; those of gluttony, avarice and self-esteem. From gluttony is bom the thought ofunchastity; from avarice, the thought of greed; from self-esteem, the thought of pride. All the rest - the thoughtsof anger, resentment, rancor, listlessness, envy, backbiting and so on - are consequent upon one or other of thesethree. These passions, then, tie the intellect to material things and drag it down to earth, pressing on it like amassive stone, although by nature it is lighter and swifter than fire.

57. The origin of all the passions is self-love; their consummation is pride. Self-love is a mindless love for the body.He who cuts this off cuts off at the same time all the passions that come from it.

58. Just as parents have a special affection for the children who are the fruit of their own bodies, so the intellectnaturally clings to its own thoughts. And just as to passionately fond parents their own children seem the mostcapable and most beautiful of all - though they may be quite the most ridiculous in every way - so to a foolishintellect its own thoughts appear the most intelligent of all, though they may be utterly degraded. The wise mandoes not regard his own thoughts in this way. It is precisely when he feels convinced that they are true and goodthat he most distrasts his own judgment. He makes other wise men the judges of his thoughts and arguments -lest he should ran, or may have ran, in vain (cf. Gal. 2:2) - and from them receives assurance.

59. When you overcome one of the grosser passions, such as gluttony, unchastity, anger or greed, the thought ofself-esteem at once assails you. If you defeat this thought, the thought of pride succeeds it.

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60. All the gross passions that dominate the soul drive from it the thought of self-esteem. But when all thesepassions have been defeated, they leave self-esteem free to take control.

61. Self-esteem, whether it is eradicated or whether it remains, begets pride. When it is eradicated, it generates self-conceit; when it remains, it produces boastfulness.

62. Self-esteem is eradicated by the hidden practice of the virtues, pride, by ascribing our achievements to God.

63. He who has been granted knowledge of God, and fully enjoys the pleasure that comes from it, despises all thepleasures produced by the soul's desiring power.

64. He who desires earthly things desires either food, or things which satisfy his sexual appetite, or human fame, orwealth, or some other thing consequent upon these. Unless the intellect finds something more noble to which itmay transfer its desire, it will not be persuaded to scorn these things completely. The knowledge of God and ofdivine things is incomparably more noble than these earthly things.

65. Those who scorn sensual pleasures do so either from fear, or from hope, or from knowledge and love for God.

66. Passion-free knowledge of divine things does not persuade the intellect to scorn material things completely; it islike the passion-free thought of a sensible thing. It is therefore possible to find many men who have muchknowledge and yet wallow in the passions of the flesh like pigs in the mire. Through their diligence theytemporarily cleanse themselves and attain knowledge, but then they grow negligent. In this they resemble Saul:for Saul was granted the

kingdom, but conducted himself unworthily and was driven out with terrible wrath (cf.1 Sam. 10-15).

67. Just as passion-free thought of human things does not compel the intellect to scorn divine things, so passion-freeknowledge of divine things does not fully persuade it to scorn human things. For in this world truth exists inshadows and conjectures. That is why there is need for the blessed passion of holy love, which binds theintellect to spiritual contemplation and persuades it to prefer what is immaterial to what is material, and what isintelligible and divine to what is apprehended by the senses.

68. If a man has cut off the passions and so has freed his thoughts from passion, it does not necessarily mean thathis thoughts are

already orientated towards the divine. It may be that he feels no passionate attraction either for human or for divinethings. This occurs in the case of those simply living the life of ascetic practice without yet having been grantedspiritual knowledge. Such men keep the passions at bay either by fear of punishment or by hope of the kingdom.

69. 'We walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7) and we gain spiritual knowledge through symbols, indistinctly asin a mirror (cf 1 Cor. 13:12). Thus we must devote much time to this kind of knowledge, so that by long studyand constant application we may achieve a persistent state of contemplation.

70. If we cut off the causes of the passions for only a short while, and occupy ourselves with spiritual contemplationwithout making it our sole and constant concern, we easily revert to the passions of the flesh, gaining nothingfrom our labor but theoretical knowledge coupled with conceit. The result is a gradual darkening of thisknowledge itself and a complete turning of the intellect towards material things.

71. The passion of love, when reprehensible, occupies the intellect with material things, but when rightly directedunites it with the divine. For the intellect tends

to develop its powers among those things to which it devotes itsattention; and where it develops its powers, there it will direct its desire and love. It will direct them, that is tosay, either to what is divine, intelligible and proper to its nature, or to the passions and things of the flesh.

72. God created both the invisible and the visible worlds, and so He obviously also made both the soul and thebody. If the visible world is so beautiful, what must the invisible world be like? And if the invisible world issuperior to the visible world, how much superior to both is God their Creator? If, then, the Creator of everythingthat is beautiful is superior to all His creation, on what grounds does the intellect abandon what is superior to alland engross itself in what is worst of all - I mean the passions of the flesh? Clearly this happens because theintellect has lived with these passions and grown accustomed to them since birth, whereas it has not yet hadperfect experience of Him who is superior to all and beyond all things. Thus, if we gradually wean the intellectaway from this relationship by long practice of controlling our indulgence in pleasure and by persistentmeditation on divine realities, the

intellect will gradually devote itself more and more to these realities, will recognize its own dignity, and finallytransfer all its desire to the divine.

73. He who speaks dispassionately of his brother's sins does so either to correct him or to benefit another. If hespeaks for any other reason, either to the brother himself or to another person, he speaks to abuse him or ridiculehim. In this case he will not escape being abandoned by God. On the contrary, he will fall into the same sin orother sins and, censured and reproached by other men, will be put to shame.

74. It is not always for the same reason that sinners commit the same sin. The reasons vary. For example, it is onething to sin through force of habit and another to sin through being carried away by a sudden impulse. In thelatter case the man did not deliberately choose the sin either before committing it, or afterwards: on thecontrary, he is deeply distressed that the sin has occurred. It is quite different with the man who sins throughforce of habit. Prior to the act itself

he was already sinning in thought, and after it he is still in the same state ofmind.

75. He who cultivates the virtues for the sake of self-esteem also seeks after spiritual knowledge for the same

reason. Such a man plainly does not do anything or discuss anything for the edification of others. On thecontrary, he always seeks the praise of those who see him or hear him. His passion is brought to light whensome of these people censure his actions or words. This distresses him greatly, not because he has failed toedify them - for that was not his aim - but because he has been humiliated.

76. The presence of the passion of avarice reveals itself when a person enjoys receiving but resents having to give.Such a person is not fit to fulfill the office of treasurer or bursar.

77. A man endures suffering either for the love of God, or for hope of reward, or for fear of punishment, or for fearof men, or because of his nature, or for pleasure, or for gain, or out of self-esteem, or from necessity.

78. It is one thing to be delivered from sinful thoughts and another to be free from passions. Frequently a man isdelivered from such thoughts when the things which rouse his passions are not present. But the passions liehidden in the soul and are brought to light when the things themselves are present. Hence one must

watch over the intellect m the presence of things and must discern for which of them it manifests a passion.

79. A true friend is one who in times of trial calmly and imperturbably suffers with his neighbor the ensuingafflictions, privations and disasters as if they were his own.

80. Do not treat your conscience with contempt, for it always advises you to do what is best. It sets before you thewill of God and the angels; it frees you from

the secret defilements of the heart; and when you depart this life itgrants you the gift of intimacy with God.

81. If you wish to be a person of understanding and moderation, and not to be a slave to the passion of conceit,continually search among created things for what is hidden from your knowledge. When you find that there arevast numbers of different things that escape your notice, you will wonder at your ignorance and abase your

presumption. And when you have come to know yourself, you wiU understand many great and wonderfulthings: for to think that one knows prevents one from advancing in knowledge.

82. The person who truly wishes to be healed is he who does not refuse treatment. This treatment consists of thepain and distress brought on by various misfortunes. He who refuses them does not realize what theyaccomplish in this world or what he will gain from them when he departs this life.

83. Self-esteem and avarice produce each other. Those who are full of self-esteem acquire riches and those who arerich become full of self-esteem. That is what happens to people living in the world. In the case of a monk, if hehas renounced possessions, he becomes still more full of self-esteem; but if he has money he is ashamed andhides it as something unworthy of one who wears the habit.

84. The mark of monastic self-esteem is to be puffed up about one's virtue and its consequences. The mark ofmonastic pride is to be conceited about one's own achievements, to ascribe these achievements to oneself andnot to God, and to hold others in contempt. The mark of worldly self-esteem and pride is to be puffed up andconceited about one's beauty, wealth, power and moral judgment.

85. The achievements of the worldly man constitute the failings of the monk, and the achievements of the monkconstitute the failings of the worldly man. For example, the achievements of the worldly man are wealth, fame,power, luxury, comfort, children

and what is consequent upon all these things. But the monk is destroyed if he obtains any of them. His achievementsare the total shedding of possessions, the rejection of esteem and power, self-control, hardship, and all that isconsequent upon them. If a lover of the world obtains these against his will, he considers it a great calamity and isoften in danger even of killing himself; some people have actually done this.

Food was created for nourishment and healing. Those who eat food for purposes other than these two aretherefore to be condemned as self-indulgent, because they misuse the gifts God has given us for our use. In all

things misuse is a sin.

87. Humility consists in constant prayer combined with tears and suffering. For this ceaseless calling upon God forhelp prevents us from foolishly growing confident in our own strength and wisdom, and from putting ourselvesabove others. These are dangerous diseases of the passion of pride.

88. It is one thing to fight against a passion-free thought so that it will not stimulate a passion; it is another to fightagainst an impassioned thought so that there will be no assent to it. Both these two forms of counter-attackprevent the thoughts themselves from persisting.

89. Resentment is linked with rancor. When the intellect forms the image of a brother's face with a feeling ofresentment, it is clear that it harbors rancor against him. "The way of the rancorous leads to death' (Prov. 12:28.LXX), because "whoever harbors rancor is a transgressor' (Prov. 21:24. LXX).

90. If you harbor rancor against anybody, pray for him and you will prevent the passion from being aroused; for bymeans of prayer you will separate your resentment from the thought of the wrong he has done you. When youhave become loving and compassionate towards him, you will wipe the passion completely from your soul. Ifsomebody regards you with rancor, be pleasant to him, be humble and agreeable in his company, and you willdeliver him from his passion.

91. You will find it hard to check the resentment of an envious person, for what he envies in you he considers hisown misfortune. You cannot check his envy

except by hiding from him the thing that arouses his passion. If thisthing benefits many but fills him with resentment, which side will you take? You have to help the majority

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but without, as far as possible, disregarding him, and without being seduced by the cunning of the passion itself, foryou are defending not the passion but the sufferer. You must in humility consider him superior to yourself, andalways, everywhere and in every matter put his interest above yours. As for your own envy, you will be able tocheck it if you rejoice with the man whom you envy whenever he rejoices, and grieve whenever he grieves, thus

fulfilling St Paul's words, 'Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep' (Rom. 12:15).

92. Our intellect lies between angel and demon, each of which works for its own ends, the one encouraging virtueand the other vice. The intellect has both the authority and the power to follow or resist whichever it wishes to.

93. The angelic powers urge us towards what is holy. Our natural instincts and our probity of intention assist us.But the passions and sinfulness of intention reinforce the provocations of the demons.

94. When the intellect is pure, sometimes God Himself approaches and teaches it: and sometimes the angelicpowers, or the nature of the created things that it contemplates, suggest holy things to it.

95. An intellect which has been granted spiritual knowledge must keep its conceptual images free from passion, itscontemplation unfaltering, and its state of prayer untroubled. But it cannot always guard these from intrusionsby the flesh, because it is obscured by the ploys of demons.

96. The things that distress us are not always the same as those that make us angry, the things that distress us beingfar more numerous than those which make us angry. For example, the fact that something has been broken, orlost, or that a

certain person has died, may only distress us. But other things may both distress us and make usangry, if we lack the spirit of divine philosophy.

97. When the intellect gives attention to conceptual images of physical objects, it is assimilated to the configurationof each image. If it contemplates these objects spiritually, it is transformed in various ways according to whichof them it contemplates. But once it is established in God, it loses form and configuration altogether, for bycontemplating Him who is simple it becomes simple itself and wholly filled with spiritual radiance.

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98. A soul is perfect if its passible aspect is totally orientated towards God.

99. A perfect intellect is one which by true faith and in a manner beyond all unknowing supremely knows thesupremely Unknowable; and which, in surveying the entirety of God's creation, has received from God an all-embracing knowledge of the providence and judgment which governs it - in so far, of course, as all this ispossible to man.

100. Time has three divisions. Faith is coextensive with all three, hope with one, and love with the remaining two.Moreover, faith and hope will last to a certain point; but love, united beyond union with Him who is more thaninfinite, will remain for all eternity, always increasing beyond all measure. That is why "the greatest of them islove' (1 Cor. 13:13).

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1. First the intellect marvels when it reflects on the absolute infinity of God, that boundless sea for which it longsso much. Then it is amazed at how God has brought things into existence out of nothing. But just as 'Hismagnificence is without limit' (Ps. 145:3. LXX), so 'there is no penetrating His purposes' (Isa.

40:28).

2. How can the intellect not marvel when it contemplates that immense and more than astonishing sea ofgoodness? Or how is it not astounded when it reflects on how and from what source there have come into beingboth nature endowed with intelligence and intellect, and the four elements which compose physical bodies,although no matter existed before their generation? What kind of potentiality was it which, once actualized,brought these things into being? But all this is not accepted by those who follow the pagan Greek philosophers,ignorant as they are of that all-powerful goodness and its effective wisdom and knowledge, transcending thehuman intellect.

3. God is the Creator from all eternity, and He creates when He wills, in His infinite goodness, through Hiscoessential Logos and Spirit. Do not raise the objection: "Why did He create at a particular moment since He isgood from all eternity?' For I reply that the unsearchable wisdom of the infinite essence does not come withinthe compass of human knowledge.

4. When the Creator willed. He gave being to and manifested that knowledge of created things which alreadyexisted in Him from all eternity. For in the case of almighty God it is ridiculous to doubt that He can give beingto anything when He so wills.

5. Try to learn why God created; for that is true knowledge. But do not try to learn how He created or why He didso comparatively recently; for that does not come within the compass of your mtel-

lect. Of divine realities some may be apprehended by men and others may not. Unbridled speculation, as one of thesaints has said, can drive one headlong over the precipice.

6. Some say that the created order has coexisted with God from eternity; but this is impossible. For how can thingswhich are limited in every way coexist from eternity with Him who is altogether infinite? Or how are theyreally creations if

they are coetemal with the Creator? This notion is drawn from the pagan Greek philosophers,who claim that God is in no way the creator of being but only of qualities. We, however, who know almightyGod, say that He is the creator not only of qualities but also of the being of created things. If this is so, createdthings have not coexisted with God from eternity.

7. Divinity and divine realities are in some respects knowable and in some respects unknowable. They areknowable in the contemplation of what appertains to God's essence and unknowable as regards that essenceitself

8. Do not look for conditions and properties in the simple and infinite essence of the Holy Trinity; otherwise youwill make It composite like created beings - a ridiculous and blasphemous thing to do in the case of God.

9. Only the infinite Being, all-powerful and creative of all things, is simple, unique, unqualified, peaceful andstable. Every creature, consisting as it does of being and accident, is composite and always in need of divineprovidence, for it is not free from change.

10. Both intelligible and sensible nature, on being brought into existence by God, received powers to apprehendcreated beings. Intelligible nature received powers of intellection, and sensible nature powers of sense-perception.

11. God is only participated in. Creation both participates and communicates: it participates in being and in well-being, but communicates only well-being. But corporeal nature communicates this in one way and incorporeal

nature in another.

12. Incorporeal nature communicates well-being by speaking, by acting, and by being contemplated; corporealnature only by being contemplated.

13. Whether or not a nature endowed with intelligence and intellect is to exist eternally depends on the will ofthe Creator whose

every creation is good; but whether such a nature is good or bad depends on its own will.

14. Evil is not to be imputed to the essence of created beings, but to their erroneous and mindless motivation.

15. A soul's motivation is rightly ordered when its desiring power is subordinated to self-control, when itsmcensive power rejects hatred and cleaves to love, and when its power of intelligence, through prayer andspiritual contemplation, advances towards God.

16. If in time of trial a man does not patiently endure his afflictions, but cuts himself off from the love of hisspiritual brethren, he does not yet possess perfect love or a deep knowledge of divine providence.

17. The aim of divine providence is to unite by means of true faith and spiritual love those separated in variousways by vice. Indeed, the Savior endured His sufferings so that 'He should gather together into one the scatteredchildren of God' (John 11: 52). Thus, he who does not resolutely bear trouble, endure affliction, and patientlysustain hardship, has strayed from the path of divine love and from the purpose of providence.

18. If 'love is long-suffering and kind' (1 Cor. 13:4), a man who is fainthearted in the face of his afflictions andwho therefore behaves wickedly towards those who have offended him, and stops loving them, surely lapsesfrom the purpose of divine providence.

19. Watch yourself, lest the vice which separates you from your brother lies not in him but in yourself. Be

reconciled with him without delay, so that you do not lapse from the commandment of love.

20. Do not hold the commandment of love in contempt, for through it you will become a son of God. But if youtransgress it, you will become a son of Gehenna.

21. What separates us from the love of friends is envying or being envied, causing or receiving harm, insulting orbeing insulted, and suspicious thoughts. Would that you had never done or experienced anything of this sort andin this way separated yourself from the love of a friend.

22. Has a brother been the occasion of some trial for you and has your resentment led you to hatred? Do not letyourself be overcome by this hatred, but conquer it with love. You will succeed in this by praying to Godsincerely for your brother and by accepting his

apology: or else by conciliating him with an apology yourself, by regarding yourself as responsible for the trial andby patiently waiting until the cloud has passed.

23. A long-suffering man is one who waits patiently for his trial to end and hopes that his perseverance will berewarded.

24. 'The long-suffering man abounds in understanding" (Prov. 14:29), because he endures everything to the endand, while awaiting that end, patiently bears his distress. The end, as St Paul says, is everlasting life (cf. Rom.6:22). 'And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hastsent' (John 17:3).

25. Do not lightly discard spiritual love: for men there is no other road to salvation.

26. Because today an assault of the devil has aroused some hatred in you, do not judge as base and wicked a brother

whom yesterday you regarded as spiritual and virtuous: but with long-suffering love dwell on the goodness youperceived yesterday and expel today's hatred from your soul.

27. Do not condemn today as base and wicked the man whom yesterday you praised as good and commended asvirtuous, changing from love to hatred, because he has criticized you; but even though you are still full ofresentment, commend him as before, and you will soon recover the same saving love.

28. When talking with other brethren, do not adulterate your usual praise of a

brother by surreptitiously introducingcensure into the conversation because you still harbor some hidden resentment against him. On the contrary, inthe company of others give unmixed praise and pray for him sincerely as if you were praying for yourself; thenyou will soon be delivered from this destructive hatred.

29. Do not say, "I do not hate my brother', when you simply efface the thought of him from your mind. Listen toMoses, who said, "Do not hate your brother in your mind; but reprove him and you will not incur sin throughhim' (Lev. 19:17. LXX).

30. If a brother happens to be tempted and persists in insulting you, do not be driven out of your state of love, eventhough the same evil demon troubles your mind. You will not be driven out of that state if, when abused, youbless: when slandered, you praise;

and when tricked, you maintain your affection. This is the way of

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Christ's philosophy: if you do not follow it you do not share His company.

31. Do not think that those who bring you reports which fill you with resentment and make you hate your brotherare affectionately disposed towards you, even if they seem to speak the truth. On the contrary, turn away fromthem as if they were poisonous snakes, so that you may both prevent them from uttering slanders and deliveryour own soul from wickedness.

32. Do not irritate your brother by speaking to him equivocaUy;

otherwise you may receive the same treatment from him and so drive out both your love and his. Rather, rebukehim frankly and affectionately, thus removing the grounds for resentment and freeing both him and yourselffrom your irritation and distress.

33. Examine your conscience scrupulously, in case it is your fault that your brother is still hostile. Do not cheatyour conscience, for it knows your secrets,

and at the hour of your death it will accuse you and in time of prayerit will be a stumbling-block to you.

34. In times of peaceful relationships do not recall what was said by a brother when there was bad feeling betweenyou, even if offensive things were said to your face, or to another person about you and you subsequently heardof them. Otherwise you will harbor thoughts of rancor and revert to your destructive hatred of your brother.

35. The deifonn soul cannot nurse hatred against a man and yet be at peace with God, the giver of thecommandments. "For', He says, 'if you do not forgive men their faults, neither will your heavenly Fatherforgive you your faults' (cf Matt. 6:14-15). If your brother does not wish to live peaceably with you,nevertheless guard yourself against hatred, praying for him sincerely and not abusing him to anybody.

36. The perfect peace of the holy angels lies in their love for God and their love for one another. This is also thecase with all the saints from the beginning of time. Most traly therefore is it said that 'on these twocommandments hang all the law and the prophets' (Matt. 22:40).

37. Stop pleasing yourself and you will not hate your brother; stop loving yourself and you will love God.

38. Once you have decided to share your life with spiritual brethren, renounce your own wishes from the start.Unless you do

this you will not be able to live peaceably either with God or with your brethren.

39. He who has attained perfect love, and has ordered his whole life in accordance with it, is the person who says'Lord Jesus' in the Holy Spirit (cf 1 Cor. 12:3).

40. Love for God always aspires to give wings to the intellect in its communion

with God; love for one's neighbormakes one always think good thoughts about him.

41. The man who still loves empty fame, or is attached to some material object, is naturally vexed with people onaccount of transitory things, or harbors rancor or hatred against them, or is a slave to shameful thoughts. Suchthings are quite foreign to the soul that loves God,

42. If you have no thought of any shameful word or action in your mind, harbor no rancor against someone who hasinjured or slandered you, and, while praying, always keep your intellect free from matter and form, you may besure that you have attained the full measure of dispassion and perfect love.

43. It is no small struggle to be freed from self-esteem. Such freedom is to be attained by the inner practice of thevirtues and by more frequent prayer: and the sign that you have attained it is that you no longer harbor rancoragainst anybody who abuses or has abused you.

44. If you want to be a just person, assign to each aspect of yourself - to your soul and your body - what accordswith it. To the intelligent aspect of the soul assign spiritual reading, contemplation and prayer; to the mcensiveaspect, spiritual love, the opposite of hatred; to the desiring aspect, moderation and self-control; to the fleshlypart, food and clothing, for these alone are necessary (cf. 1 Tim. 6:8).

45. The intellect functions in accordance with nature when it keeps the passions under control, contemplates theinner essences of created beings, and abides with God.

46. As health and disease are to the body of a living thing, and light and darkness to the eye, so virtue and vice areto the soul, and knowledge and ignorance to the intellect.

47. The commandments, the doctrines, the faith: these are the three objects of the Christian's philosophy. The

commandments separate the intellect from the passions: the doctrines lead it to the

spiritual knowledge of created beings: and faith to the contemplation of the Holy Trinity.

48. Some of those pursuing the spiritual way only repel impassioned thoughts: others cut off the passionsthemselves. Such thoughts are repelled by psalmody, or by prayer, or by raising one's mind to God, or byoccupying one's attention in some similar way. The passions are cut off through appropriate detachment fromthose things by which they are roused.

49. The passions are roused in us by, for example, women, wealth, fame and so on. We can achieve detachmentwith regard to women when, after withdrawing from the world, we wither the body, as we should, through self-control. We can achieve detachment where wealth is concerned when we make up our mind to be frugal in allthings. We can become indifferent to fame by practicing the virtues inwardly, in a way visible only to God. Andwe can act in a similar fashion with respect to other things. A person who has achieved such detachment as thiswill never hate anybody.

50. He who has renounced such things as marriage, possessions and other worldly pursuits is outwardly a monk, butmay not yet be a monk inwardly. Only he who has renounced the impassioned conceptual images of thesethings has made a monk of the inner self, the intellect. It is easy to be a monk in one's outer self if one wants tobe: but no small struggle is required to be a monk in one's inner self.

51. Who in this generation is completely freed from impassioned conceptual images, and has been granteduninterrupted, pure and spiritual prayer? Yet this is the mark of the inner monk.

52. Many passions are hidden in our souls: they can be brought to light only when the objects that rouse them arepresent.

53. A man can enjoy partial dispassion and not be disturbed by passions when the objects which rouse them areabsent. But once those objects are present, the passions quickly distract his intellect.

54. Do not imagine that you enjoy perfect dispassion when the object arousing your passion is not present. If whenit is present you remain unmoved by both the object and the subsequent thought of it, you may be sure that youhave entered the realm of dispassion. But even so do not be over-confident; for virtue when habitual kills thepassions, but when it is neglected they come to life again.

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55. He who loves Christ is bound to imitate Him to the best of his ability. Christ, for example, was alwaysconferring blessings on people: He was long-suffering when they were ungrateful and blasphemed Him: andwhen they beat Him and put Him to death. He endured it, imputing no evil at all to anyone. These are the threeacts which manifest love for one's neighbor. If he is incapable of them, the person who says that he loves Christor has attained the kingdom deceives himself. For "not everyone who says to Me: "Lord, Lord" shall enter intothe kingdom of heaven: but he that does the will of My Father" (Matt. 7:21); and again, 'He who loves Me willkeep My commandments' (cf John 14:15, 23).

56. The whole purpose of the Savior's commandments is to free the intellect from dissipation and hatred, and tolead it to the love of Him and one's neighbor. From this love springs the light of active holy knowledge.

57. When God has granted you a degree of spiritual knowledge, do not neglect love and self-control: for it is thesewhich, once they have purified the soul's passible aspect, always keep open for you the way to such knowledge.

58. Dispassion and humility lead to spiritual knowledge. Without them no one will see the Lord.

59. Since "knowledge puffs up, but love edifies" (1 Cor. 8:1), unite love with knowledge and you will free yourselffrom arrogance and be a spiritual builder, edifying both yourself and all who draw near you.

60. Love edifies because it does not envy, or feel any bitterness towards those who are envious, or ostentatiously

display what provokes envy: it does not reckon that its purpose has yet been attained (of. Phil. 3:13), and itunhesitatingly confesses its ignorance of what it does not know. Hence it frees the intellect from arrogance andalways equips it to advance in knowledge.

61. It is natural for spiritual knowledge to produce conceit and envy, especially in the early stages. Conceit comesonly from within, but envy comes both from within and from without - from within when we feel envious ofthose who have knowledge, from without when those who love knowledge feel envious of us. Love destroys allthree of these failings: conceit, because love is not puffed up: envy from within, because love is not jealous: andenvy from without, because love is iong-suffering and kind" (1 Cor. 13:4). A

person with spiritual knowledge must, then, also acquire love, so that he may always keep his intellect in a healthystate.

62. He who has been granted the grace of spiritual knowledge and yet harbors resentment, rancor or hatred foranybody, is like someone who lacerates his eyes with thorns and thistles. Hence knowledge must beaccompanied by love.

63. Do not devote all your time to your body but apply to it a measure of asceticism appropriate to its strength, andthen turn all your intellect to what is within. 'Bodily asceticism has only a limited use, but true devotion isuseful in all things' (ITim. 4:8).

64. He who always concentrates on the inner life becomes restrained, long-suffering, kind and humble. He will alsobe able to contemplate, theologize and pray. That is what St Paul meant when he said: 'Walk in the Spirit' (Gal.5:16).

65. One ignorant of the spiritual path is not on his guard against impassioned conceptual images, but devoteshimself entirely to the flesh. He is either a glutton, or licentious, or fall of resentment, anger and rancor. As aresult he darkens his intellect, or he practices excessive asceticism and so confuses his mind.

66. Scripture does not forbid anything which God has given us for our use; but it condemns immoderation andthoughtless behavior. For instance, it does not forbid us to eat, or to beget children, or to possess material thingsand to administer them properly. But it does forbid us to be gluttonous, to fornicate and so on. It does not forbidus to think of these things — they were made to be thought of - but it forbids us to think of them with passion.

67. Some of the things which we do for the sake of God are done in obedience to the commandments: others aredone not in obedience to the commandments but, so to speak, as a voluntary offering. For example, we arerequired by the commandments to love God and our neighbor, to love our enemies, not to commit adultery ormurder and so on. And when we transgress these commandments, we are condemned. But we are notcommanded to live as virgins, to abstain from marriage, to renounce possessions, to withdraw into solitude andso forth. These are of the nature of gifts, so that if through weakness we are unable to fulfill some of thecommandments, we may by these free gifts propitiate our blessed Master.

68. He who honors celibacy and virginity must keep his loins girded and his lamp burning (cf Luke 12:35). Hekeeps his loins

girded through self-control, and his lamp burning through prayer, contemplation and spiritual love.

69. Some of the brethren think that they are excluded from the Holy Spirit's gifts of grace. Because they neglect topractice the commandments they do not know that he who has an unadulterated faith in Christ has within himthe sum total of all the divine gifts. Since through our laziness we are far from having an active love for Him - alove which shows us the divine treasures within us - we naturally think that we are excluded from these gifts.

70. If, as St Paul says, Christ dwells in our hearts through faith (cf Eph. 3:17), and all the treasures of wisdom andspiritual knowledge are hidden in Him (cf. Col. 2:3), then all the treasures of wisdom and spiritual knowledgeare hidden in

our hearts. They are revealed to the heart in proportion to our purification by means of thecomm andments.

71. This is the treasure hidden in the field of your heart (of. Matt. 13:44), which you have not yet found because ofyour laziness. Had you found it, you would have sold everything and bought that field. But now you haveabandoned that field and give all your attention to the land nearby, where there is nothing but thorns andthistles.

72. It is for this reason that the Savior says, 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8) for Heis hidden in the hearts of those who believe in Him. They shall see Him and the riches that are in Him whenthey have purified themselves through love and self-control; and the greater their purity, the more they will see.

73. And that is why He also says, "Sell what you possess and give alms' (Luke 12:33), 'and you will find that allthings are clean for you" (Luke 11:41). This applies to those who no longer spend their time on things to do withthe body, but strive to cleanse the intellect (which the Lord calls 'heart") from hatred and dissipation. For thesedefile the intellect and do not allow it to see Christ, who dwells in it by the grace of holy baptism.

74. In Scripture the virtues are called 'ways'. The greatest of all the virtues is love. That is why St Paul said, 'Now 1will show you the best way of all" (1 Cor. 12:31), one that persuades us to scorn material things and valuenothing transitory more than what is eternal.

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75. Love of God is opposed to desire, for it persuades the intellect to control itself with regard to sensual pleasures.Love for our neighbor is opposed to anger, for it makes us scorn fame and riches. These are the two pencewhich our Savior gave to the innkeeper (cf Luke 10:31), so that he should take care of you. But do not bethoughtless and associate with robbers; otherwise you will be beaten again and left not merely unconscious butdead.

76. Cleanse your intellect from anger, rancor and shameful thoughts, and you will be able to perceive theindwelling of Christ.

77. Who enlightened you with faith in the holy, coessential and adorable Trinity? Or who made known to you the

incarnate dispensation of one of the Holy Trinity? Who taught you about the inner essences of incorporealbeings, or about the origin and consummation of the visible world, or about the resurrection from the dead andeternal life, or about the glory of the kingdom of heaven and the dreadful judgment? Was it not the grace ofChrist dwelling in you, which is the pledge of the Holy Spirit? What is greater than this grace? What is morenoble than this wisdom and knowledge? What is more lofty than these promises? But if we are lazy andnegligent, and if we do not cleanse ourselves from the passions which defile us, blinding our intellect and sopreventing us from seeing the inner nature of these realities more clearly than the sun, let us blame ourselvesand not deny the indwelling of grace.

78. God, who has promised you eternal blessings (cf. Tit. 1:2) and has given you the pledge of the Spirit in yourhearts (cf. 2 Cor. 1:22), has commanded you to pay attention to how you live, so that the inner man may befreed from the passions and begin here and now to enjoy these blessings.

79. When you have been granted the higher forms of the contemplation of divine realities, give your utmostattention to love and self-control, so that you may keep your soul's passible aspect undisturbed and preserve thelight of your soul in undimmished splendor.

80. Bridle your soul's mcensive power with love, quench its desire with self-control, give wings to its intelligencewith prayer, and the light of your intellect will never be darkened.

81. Disgrace, injury, slander either against one's faith or one's manner of life, beatings, blows and so on - these arethe things which dissolve love, whether they happen to oneself or to any of

one's relatives or friends. He who loses his love because of these things has not yet understood the purpose ofChrist's commandments.

82. Strive as hard as you can to love every man. If you cannot yet do this, at least do not hate anybody. But eventhis is beyond your power unless you scorn worldly things.

83. Has someone vilified you? Do not hate him; hate the vilification and the demon which induced him to utter it. If

you hate the vihfier, you have hated a man and so broken the commandment. What he has done in word you doin action. To keep the commandment, show the quahties of love and help him in any way you can, so that youmay deliver him from evil.

84. Christ does not want you to feel the least hatred, resentment, anger or rancor towards anyone in any way or onaccount of any transitory thing whatsoever. This is proclaimed throughout the four Gospels.

85. Many of us are talkers, few are doers. But no one should distort the word of God through his own negligence.He must confess his weakness and not hide God's truth. Otherwise he will be guilty not only of breaking thecommandments but also of falsifying the word of God.

86. Love and self-control free the soul from passions; spiritual reading and contemplation deliver the intellect fromignorance; and the state of prayer brings it into the presence of God Himself.

87. When the demons see that we scorn the things of this world in order not to hate men on account of such things,and so to fall away from love, then they incite slanders against us. In this way they hope that, unable to containour resentment, we will be provoked into hating those who slander us.

88. Nothing pains the soul more than slander, whether directed against one's faith or one's manner of life. No onecan be indifferent to it except those who like Susanna have their eyes firmly fixed on God (cf. Sus. verse 35).For only God has the power to rescue from peril, as He rescued her, to convince men of the truth, as He did inher case, and to encourage the soul with hope.

89. To the extent that you pray with all your soul for the person who slanders

you, God will make the truth knownto those who have been scandalized by the slander.

90. Only God is good by nature (cf. Matt. 19:17), and only he

who imitates God is good in will and purpose. For it is the intention of such a person to unite the wicked to Him whois good by nature, so that they too may become good. That is why, though reviled by them, he blesses; persecuted,he endures; vilified, he supplicates (cf 1 Cor. 4:12-13); put to death, he prays for them. He does everything so as notto lapse from the purpose of love, which is God Himself.

91. The Lord's commandments teach us to use neutral things intelligently. Such use purifies the soul's state. A stateof purity begets discrimination; discrimination begets dispassion; and it is from dispassion that perfect love isbom.

92. If when some trial occurs you cannot overlook a friend's fault, whether real or apparent, you have not yetattained dispassion. For when the passions which lie deep in the soul are disturbed, they blind the mind,preventing it from perceiving the light of truth and from discriminating between good and evil. If you are insuch a state you have likewise not yet attained perfect love, the love which expels the fear of judgment (cf. 1John 4:18).

93. 'A faithful friend is beyond price' (Ecclus. 6:15), since he regards his friend's misfortunes as his own andsuffers with him, sharing his trials until death.

94. Friends are many, but in times of prosperity (cf. Prov. 19:4). In times of adversity you will have difficulty infinding even one.

95. One should love every man from the soul, but one should place one's hope only in God and serve Him with allone's strength. For so long as He protects us against harm, all our friends treat us with respect and all ourenemies are powerless to injure us. But once He abandons us, all our friends turn away from

us while all ourenemies prevail against us.

96. There are four principal ways in which God abandons us. The first is the way of the divine dispensation, so thatthrough our apparent abandonment others who are abandoned may be saved. Our Lord is an example of this (cfMatt. 27:46). The second is the way of trial and testing, as in the case of job and Joseph; for it made Job a pillarof courage and Joseph a pillar of self-restraint (cf. Gen. 39:8). The third is the way of fatherly correction, as inthe case of St Paul, so that by being humble he might preserve the superabundance of grace (cf. 2 Cor. 12:7).The fourth is the way of rejection.

as in the case of the Jews, so that by being punished they might be brought to repentance. These are all ways ofsalvation, full of divine blessing and wisdom.

97. Only those who scrupulously keep the commandments, and are true initiates into divine judgments, do notabandon their friends when God permits these friends to be put to the test. Those who scorn the commandmentsand who are ignorant about divine judgments rejoice with their friend in the times of his prosperity;

but when in times of trial he suffers hardships, they abandon him and sometimes even side with those whoattack him.

98. The friends of Christ love all truly but are not themselves loved by all: the friends of the world neither love allnor are loved by all. The friends of Christ persevere in love to the end; the friends of the world persevere onlyuntil they fall out with each other over some worldly thing.

99. 'A faithful friend is a strong defense" (Ecclus. 6:14); for when things are going well with you, he is a goodcounselor and a sympathetic collaborator, while when things are going badly, he is the truest of helpers and amost compassionate supporter.

100.Many have said much about love, but you will find love itself only if you

seek it among the disciples of Christ.For only they have true Love as love's teacher. 'Though I have the gift of prophecy', says St Paul, 'and knowall mysteries and all knowledge . . . and have no love, it profits me nothing' (1 Cor. 13:2-3). He who possesseslove possesses God Himself, for "God is love' (1 John 4:8). To Him be glory throughout the ages. Amen.

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Two Hundred Texts on Theology

and the

Incarnate Dispensation of the Son of God

Written for ThalassiosFirst Century

God is one, unoriginate, incomprehensible, possessing completely the total potentiality of being, altogetherexcluding notions of when and how, inaccessible to all, and not to be known through natural image by anycreature.

So far as we are able to understand, for Himself God does not constitute either an origin, or an intermediarystate, or a consummation, or anything else at all which can be seen to qualify naturally things that are sequent toHim. For He is undetermined, unchanging and infinite, since He is infinitely beyond all being, potentiality andactualization.

3. Every being whose self-limitation is intrinsic to it is by nature the origin of the activity perceived as' potentiallypresent within it. Every natural activity in the process of actualization - and such activity is, on the conceptuallevel, sequent to the being itself but prior to its own actualization - is an intermediary state, since by nature itlies between the being in which it is present potentially and its own actualization. Every actualization, limited asit naturally is by its own inner principle, is the consummation of that activity which has its origm in the beingand which, conceptually speaking, precedes the actualization.

4. God is not a being either in the general or in any specific sense of the word, and so He cannot be an "origin. Noris He a potentiality either in the general or in any specific sense, and so He is not an intermediary state. Nor isHe an

general or in any specific sense, and so He cannot be the consummation of that activity which proceeds from a beingin which it is perceived to pre-exist as a potentiahty. On the contrary. He is the author of being and simuhaneouslyan entity transcending being; He is the author of potentiahty and simultaneously the ground transcendingpotentiality; and He is the active and inexhaustible state of all actualization. In short. He is the author of all being,potentiality and actualization, and of every origin, intermediary state and consummation.

5. Origin, the intermediary state and consummation characterize things divided by time, as indeed theycharacterize things existing in the eon. For time, by which change is measured, is defined numerically; while theeon, whose existence presupposes a "when', possesses dimensionality, since its existence has an origin. And iftime and the eon have an origin, how much more so will those things that exist within them.

6. God by nature is always one and alone, substantively and absolutely, containing in Himself ail-inclusively thetotality of substantive being, since He transcends even substantiveness itself. If this is so, there is nothingwhatsoever among all the things to which we ascribe being that possess substantive being. Thus nothing what-soever different in essence from God can be envisaged as coexisting with Him from eternity - neither the eon,nor time, nor anything which exists within them. For substantive being and being which is not substantive nevercoincide.

7. No origin, intermediary state or consummation can ever be altogether free from the category of relationship.God, being infinitely beyond every kind of relationship, is by nature neither an origin, nor an intermediary state,nor a consummation, nor any of those things to which it is possible to apply the category of relationship.

8. Created beings are termed intelligible because each of them has an origin that can be known rationally. But Godcannot be termed intelligible, while from our apprehension of intelligible beings we can do no more thanbelieve that He exists. On this account no intelligible being is in any way to be compared with Him.

9. Created beings can be known rationally by means of the inner principles which are by nature intrinsic to suchbeings and by which

they are naturally defined. But from our apprehension of these principles inherent in created beings we can do nomore than believe that God exists. To the devout believer God gives something more sure than any proof: therecognition and the faith that He substantively is. Faith is true knowledge, the principles of which are beyondrational demonstration; for faith makes real for us things beyond intellect and reason (cf. Heb. 11:1).

10. God is the origin, intermediary state and consummation of all created things, but as acting upon things not asacted upon, which is also the case where everything else we call Him is concerned. He is origin as Creator,intermediary state as provident ruler, and consummation as final end. For, as Scripture says, "All things arefrom Him and through Him, and have Him as their goal" (Rom. 11:36).

11. No deiform soul is in its essence of greater value than any other deiform soul. For when God in His supernalgoodness creates each soul in His own image. He brings it into being endowed with self-determination. Byexercising this freedom of choice each soul either reaffirms its true nobility or through its actions deliberatelyembraces what is ignoble.

12. God, it is said, is the Sun of righteousness (cf. Mai. 4:2), and the rays of His supernal goodness shine down onall men alike. The soul is wax if it cleaves to God, but clay if it cleaves to matter. Which it does depends uponits own will and purpose. Clay hardens in the sun, while wax grows soft. Similarly, every soul that, despiteGod's admonitions, deliberately cleaves to the material world, hardens like clay and drives itself to destruction,just as Pharaoh did (cf. Exod. 7:13). But every soul that cleaves to God is softened like wax and, receiving theimpress and stamp of divine realities, it becomes "in spirit the dwelling-place of God" (Eph. 2:22).

13. If a person's intellect is illumined with intellections of the divine, if his speech is unceasingly devoted tosinging the praises of the Creator, and if his senses are hallowed by unsullied images - he has enhanced thatsanctity which is his by nature, as created in the image of God, by adding to it the sanctity of the divine likenessthat is attained through the exercise of his own free will.

14. A man keeps his soul undefiled before God if he compels his mind to meditate only on God and His supremegoodness, makes his thought a true interpreter and exponent of this goodness, and teaches his senses to formholy images of the visible world and all

the things in it, and to convey to the soul the magnificence of the inner principles

lying within all things.

15. God has freed us from bitter slavery to tyrannical demons and has given us humility as a compassionate yoke ofdevoutness. It is humility which tames every demonic power, produces in those who accept it every kind ofsanctity, and keeps that sanctity inviolate.

16. He who believes fears; he who fears is humble; he who is humble becomes gentle and renders inactive thoseimpulses of m-censiveness and desire which are contrary to nature. A person who is gentle keeps thecommandments; he who keeps the commandments is purified; he who is purified is illumined; he who isillumined is made a consort of the divine Bridegroom and Logos in the shrine of the mysteries.

17. Sometimes when a farmer is looking for a suitable spot to which to transplant a tree, he unexpectedly comesacross a treasure. Something similar may happen to the seeker after God. If he is humble and unaffected, and ifhis soul, after the example of the blessed Jacob (cf Gen. 27:11), is sleek, and not hirsute with materiality, thenGod may grant him the contemplation of divine wisdom even though he has not labored for it. But if the Fatherthen asks him how he came by this knowledge, saying to him "What is this you have found so quickly. Myson?' he should reply, as Jacob did, 'It is what the Lord God has granted to me" (Gen. 27:20. LXX). We shouldrealize in such a case that what he has found is a spiritual treasure; for the devoted seeker after God is a spiritualfarmer who transplants, as if it were a tree, his contemplation of visible and sensory things to the field of noeticrealities; and in so doing he find a treasure - the revelation by grace of the wisdom in created things.

18. Although in his humility he has not expected it, the seeker after God may suddenly receive spiritual knowledgeof divine contemplation. But this may so devastate the mind of someone else who is unsuccessfully toiling to

acquire such knowledge for the sake of self-display that, mad with jealousy, he plots to murder his brother andgrows sick with resentment because he does not experience the elation that comes from being praised.

19. Those who seek spiritual knowledge with much labor, but do not succeed in finding it, fail either through lackof faith or perhaps because in their stupidity and jealousy they have it in mind to

attack those who possess knowledge, just as the people of old once attacked Moses. We can rightly apply to themthe passage in Scripture which says that when some men tried to force their way up the mountain, the Amoritesdwelling in that mountain came out and wounded them (cf Deut. 1:43-44). For inevitably those who put on a showof holiness for the sake of self-display not only fail to achieve anythmg through their false piety, but also arewounded by their conscience.

20. He who pursues spiritual knowledge for the sake of display and fails to attain it should not envy his neighbor orbe cast down. On the Contrary, as commanded, let him observe the preparation for the Sabbath in some nearbyplace: through the practice of the virtues, by working hard with his body, he will prepare his soul for thatknowledge.

21. Those who truly and devoutly aspire to an understanding of created beings, and have no thoughts of self-display, will find that they are granted lucid insight into such beings and that through this insight they attain theknowledge they seek in a most precise fashion. To such people the Law says, "You will come and inherit finelarge cities, and houses which you did not build, full of good things, and deep wells which you did not dig, andvines and olive trees which you did not plant' (cf. Deut. 6:10-11). For he who lives not for himself but for God(cf. 2 Cor. 5:15) is filled with all the gifts of grace, which were not previously apparent in him because of the

disturbance produced by the passions.

22. There are said to be two forms of sense-perception. The first is a habitual state and persists even when we areasleep. It does not grasp any particular object and it serves no purpose because it is not directed towards anaction. The second is the active sense-perception through which we apprehend sensible objects. Similarly, thereare two forms of knowledge. First, there is academic knowledge, which is theoretical information, gatheredmerely from habit, about the inner principles of created beings, and which serves no purpose because it is notdirected towards the practical execution of the commandments. Secondly, there is actively effective knowledge,which confers a trae experiential apprehension of created beings.

23. A hypocrite, hunting after the glory that comes from an apparent righteousness, is untroubled so long as hethinks that he

escapes notice. But when he is detected, he utters streams of imprecation, imagining that by abusing others he canhide his own deformity. Because of his craftiness Scripture has compared him to the offspring of vipers and hascommanded him to bring forth appropriate fruits of repentance (cf. Matt. 3:7-8), that is, to refashion the hidden stateof his heart so that it conforms to his outward behavior.

24. Some say that every living creature inhabiting air, earth or sea which the Law does not judge to be clean (cf.Lev. 11:1-43) is wild, even if it seems from its behavior to be tame. By the same principle, every man subject tosome passion is also wild, whatever his outward behavior.

25. He who puts on a show of friendship in order to do his neighbor some injury is a wolf hiding his wickednessunder sheep's clothing. Whenever he finds a

custom or saying which is genuinely Christian, although somewhatnaive, he seizes on it and attacks it; in numberless ways he finds fault with these sayings or customs, prying intothe liberty which the brethren have in Christ (cf. Gal.2:4).

26. He who hypocritically keeps silent for some evil purpose prepares a trap for his neighbor; and if his plan fails,he slinks off, having brought distress on himself because of his own passion. But he who is silent for a good endnourishes friendship and goes on his way rejoicing, for he has received the enlightenment which dispelsdarkness.

27. If a man impetuously interrupts a speech at a public meeting, he clearly reveals his lust for self-glory.Overpowered by this passion, he tries to obstruct the course of the discussion with endless complicatedproposals.

28. A wise man, whether teaching or learning, only wishes to learn or teach those things which are useful. He whomerely has the appearance of wisdom, whether asking or answering questions, only deals with relatively trivialthings.

29. A person who through the grace of God partakes of divine blessings is under an obligation to share themungrudgingly with others. For Scripture says, 'Freely you have received, freely give' (Matt. 10:8). He whohides the gift in the earth accuses the Lord of being hard-hearted and mean (cf. Matt. 25:24), and in order tospare the flesh he pretends to know nothing about holiness; while

he who sells the truth to enemies, and is then revealed as avid for self-glory, hangs himself, unable to bear thedisgrace (of Matt. 26:15; 27:5).

30. Those who still fear the war against the passions and dread the assaults of

invisible enemies must keep silent intheir struggle for virtue they must not enter into disputes with their enemies but through prayer must entrust allanxiety about themselves to God. To them apply the words of Exodus: 'The Lord will fight for you, and youmust be silent' (Exod. 14:14). Those, secondly, who have been released from the enemy's attacks and whogenuinely seek instruction in the ways of acquiring the virtues, need only to keep the ear of their mind open. Tothem Scripture says, "Hear 0 Israel' (Deut. 6:4). Thirdly, those who as a result of their purification ardently longfor divine knowledge may commune with God freely. To them it will be said, "What is it that you are calling toMe?' (Exod. 14:15. LXX). Thus, he who is commanded to keep silent because of his fear should seek refuge inGod; he who is commanded to listen should be ready to obey the commandments; and he who pursues spiritualknowledge should call ceaselessly to God, beseeching Him for deliverance from evil and thanking Him forcommunion in His blessings.

31. A soul can never attain the knowledge of God unless God Himself in His condescension takes hold of it andraises it up to Himself. For the human intellect lacks the power to ascend and to participate in divineillumination, unless God Himself draws it up - in so far as this is possible for the human intellect - and illuminesit with rays of divine light.

32. He who imitates the disciples of the Lord does not refuse, out of fear for the Pharisees, to walk through thecornfields on the Sabbath and pluck ears of com (cf. Matt. 12:1-2). On the contrary, when after practicing thevirtues he attains the state of dispassion, he culls the inner principles of created beings and devoutly nourisheshimself with the divine knowledge they contain.

33. According to the Gospel, the person who is simply a man of faith can remove the mountain of his sin throughthe practice of the virtues (cf. Matt. 17:20). thus freeing himself from his former attachment to the restlessgyration of sensible things. If he has the capacity to be a disciple he receives fragments of the loaves of spiritualknowledge from the hands of the Logos and feeds thousands

of people (cf. Matt. 14:19-20), demonstrating by his action how the power of the Logos is increased and multipliedby the practice of the virtues. If he also has the strength to be an apostle he cures every disease and infirmity: hecasts out demons (cf. Matt. 10:8;

Luke 10:17), that is, he banishes the activity of the passions; he heals the sick, through hope restoring a state ofdevotion to those who have lost it, and through his teaching about judgment stiffening the resolve of those who havebeen softened by sloth. For, since he has been commanded "to tread on serpents and scorpions' (Luke 10:19), hedestroys the beginning and end of sin.

34. An apostle is necessarily also a disciple and a man of faith. A disciple is not necessarily also an apostle but he iscertainly a man of faith. A person who is simply a man of faith is neither a disciple nor an apostle. However,through his manner of life and through contemplation he can be raised to the rank and dignity of a disciple, anda disciple can be raised to the rank and dignity of an apostle.

35. When what has been created in time according to the temporal order has reached maturity, it ceases fromnatural growth. But when what has been brought about by the knowledge of God through the practice of thevirtues has reached maturity, it starts to grow anew. For the end of one stage constitutes the starting-point of thenext. He who has put an end to the root of corruption in himself by practicing the virtues is initiated into othermore divine experiences. There is never an end, as there is never a beginning, to the good which God does: justas the property of light is to illuminate, so the property of God is to do good. Thus in the Law, which isconcerned with the structure of temporal things subject to generation and decay, the Sabbath is honored by restfrom work (cf. Exod. 31:14), whereas in the Gospel, which initiates us into the realm of spiritual realities, lusteris shed on the Sabbath by good actions (cf. Luke 6:9; John 5:16-17). This is so in spite of the indignation ofthose who do not yet understand that "the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath', and that "theSon of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath' (Mark 2:27-28).

36. In the Law and the prophets reference is made to the Sabbath (cf. Isa.66:23),

Sabbaths (cf. Exod. 31:13) andSabbaths of Sabbaths (cf. Lev. 16:31. LXX); and to circumcision and circumcision of circumcision (cf. Gen.17:10-13); and to harvest (cf. Gen. 8:22) and harvest of harvest, as in the text, 'when you harvest

your harvest' (cf Lev. 23:10). The texts about the Sabbath surely refer to the full attainment of practical, natural andtheological philosophy; the texts about circumcision, to separation from things that are subject to generation andfrom the inner principles of these things: the texts about harvest, to the ingathering and enjoyment of more exaltedspiritual principles on the part of the senses and the intellect. Through studying these three sets of texts the person ofspiritual knowledge may discover the reasons why Moses, when he dies, takes his Sabbath rest outside the holy land(cf. Deut. 34:5), why Joshua carried out the circumcisions after crossing the Jordan (cf. Josh. 5:3), and why thosewho inherited the promised land brought to God the superabundant fruits of the double harvest (cf. Lev. 23:11).

37. The Sabbath signifies the dispassion of the deiform soul that through practice of the virtues has utterly cast offthe marks of sin.

38. Sabbaths signify the freedom of the deiform soul that through the spiritual contemplation of created nature hasquelled even the natural activity of sense-perception.

39. Sabbaths of Sabbaths signify the spiritual calm of the deiform soul that has withdrawn the intellect even fromcontemplation of all the divine principles in created beings, that through an ecstasy of love has clothed itentirely in God

alone, and that through mystical theology has brought it altogether to rest in God.

40. Circumcision signifies the quelling of the soul's impassioned predilection for things subject to generation.

41. Circumcision of circumcision signifies the complete discarding and stripping away also of even the soul'snatural feelings for things subject to generation.

42. Harvest signifies the deiform soul's ingathering and knowledge of the more spiritual principles of createdbeings in a manner conforming to both virtue and nature.

43. Harvest of harvest signifies the apprehension of God which follows the mystical contemplation of noeticrealities and which, inaccessible to all, is consummated in the intellect in a manner beyond understanding. Suchapprehension is fittingly reaped by the person who in a worthy manner honors the Creator because of what Hehas created, whether visible or invisible.

44. There is another more spiritual harvest, which is said to belong to God Himself; there is another more mysticalcircumcision.

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and there is another more hidden Sabbath, which God celebrates when he rests from his own labors. This is shownin the following texts: 'The harvest is abundant, but the laborers are few' (Matt. 9:37). 'Circumcision of the heart mthe spirit' (Rom. 2:29). and " God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it God rested from all theworks He had begun to do' (Gen. 2:3. LXX).

45. The harvest of God signifies the total dwelling and stability of the saints in God at the consummation of theages.

46. Circumcision of the heart in the spirit signifies the utter stripping away from the senses and the intellect of theirnatural activities connected with sensible and intelligible things. This stripping away is accomplished by theSpirit's immediate presence, which completely transfigures body and soul and makes them more divine.

47. The Sabbath rest of God signifies the complete reversion of created bemgs to God. It is then that God suspendsin created beings the operation of their natural energy by inexpressibly activating in them His divine energy. Itis by virtue of this natural energy that each created being naturally acts: and God suspends its operation in each

created being to the degree to which that being participates in His divine energy and so estabhshes its ownnatural energy within God Himself.

48. One should learn from those imbued with spiritual knowledge what is to be understood by the works which Godbegan to do and what by those which He did not begin to do. For if He rested from all the works which Hebegan to do, clearly He did not rest from those works which He did not begin to do. Perhaps, then, all thatparticipates in being, such as the various essences of creatures, are works of God which began to be in time. Forthey have non-being as prior to their own being, since participant beings have not always existed. Participablebeings in which participant beings participate by grace, such as goodness and all that is included in the principleof goodness, are perhaps works of God which did not begin to be in time. Briefly, these include all life,immortality, simplicity, immutability and infinity, and all the other qualities that contemplative vision perceivesas substantively appertaining to God. These are works of God, yet not begun in time. For non-being is

never prior to goodness, nor to any of the other things we have listed, even if those things which participate in themdo in themselves have a beginning m time. All goodness is without beginning because there is no time prior to it:God is eternally the unique author of its being.

49. God is infinitely above all beings, whether participant or participable. For whatever belongs to the category ofbeing is a work of God, even though participant beings had a temporal origin, whereas participable beings wereimplanted by grace among things that come into existence in time. In this way participable beings are a kind ofinnate power clearly proclaiming God's presence in all things.

50. All immortal things and immortality itself, all living things and life itself, all holy things and holiness itself, allgood things and goodness itself, all blessings and blessedness itself, all beings and being itself are manifestlyworks of God. Some things began to be in time, for they have not always existed. Others did not begin to be intime, for goodness, blessedness, holiness and immortality have always existed. Those things which began intime exist and are said to exist by participation in the things which did not begin in time. For God is the creatorof all life, immortality, holiness and goodness; and He transcends the being of all intelligible and describablebeings.

51. The sixth day of creation, accordmg to Scripture, represents the completion of the beings that are subject tonature. The seventh day marks the limit of the flow of temporal existence. The eighth day betokens the qualityof that state which is beyond nature and time.

52. He who observes the sixth day only according to the Law, fleeing the active, soul-afflicting domination of thepassions, passes fearlessly through the sea to the desert (cf. Exod. 16:1): his Sabbath consists simply of restfrom the passions. But when he has crossed the Jordan (cf. Josh. 3:17) and has left behind this state of simplyresting from the passions, he enters into possession of the virtues.

53. He who observes the sixth day according to the Gospel, having already put to death the first impulses of sin,through cultivating the virtues attains a state of dispassion which, like a desert, is bare of all evil: his Sabbath isa rest of his

intellect even from the

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merest images suggested by the passions. But when he has crossed the Jordan he passes over into the land ofspiritual knowledge, where the intellect, the temple mystically built by peace, becomes in spirit the dwellmg place ofGod.

54. He who after the example of God has completed the sixth day with fitting actions and thoughts, and has himselfwith God's help brought his own actions to a successful conclusion, has in his understanding traversed thecondition of all things subject to nature and time and has entered into the mystical contemplation of the eonsand the things inherent in them; his Sabbath is his intellect's utter and incomprehensible abandonment andtranscendence of created beings. But if he is also found worthy of the eighth day he has risen from the dead -that is, from all that is sequent to God, whether sensible or intelligible, expressible or conceivable. He ex-periences the blessed life of God, who is the only true life, and himself becomes god by deification.

55. The sixth day is the complete fulfillment, on the part of those practicing the ascetic life, of the natural activitieswhich lead to virtue. The seventh day is the conclusion and cessation, in those leading the contemplative life, ofall natural thoughts about inexpressible spiritual knowledge. The eighth day is the transposition andtransmutation of those found worthy into a state of deification. The Lord, giving perhaps a mysterious hint ofthe seventh and the eighth days, spoke of a day and an hour of consummation which encompasses the mysteriesand the inner essences of all things. Apart from their Creator, the blessed Divinity Himself, there is no powerwhatsoever in heaven or on earth that

can know that day and hour before the actual experience of them (cf.Matt. 24:36).

56. The sixth day betokens the inner, essence of the being of created things. The seventh signifies the quality of thewell-being of created things. The eighth denotes the inexpressible mystery of the eternal well-being of createdthings.

57. Since we know that the sixth day is a symbol of practical activity, let us during this day fully discharge our debtof virtuous works, so that it may also be said of us, "And God saw everything He had made, and behold, it wasvery good' (Gen. 1:31).

58. He who exerts himself bodily in order to adorn the soul with the manifold virtues pays to God the debt of goodwork that is required of him.

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59. He who has completed the sixth day, the day of preparation, in works of righteousness has crossed over to therepose of spiritual contemplation. During such contemplation his intellect, grasping in a divine manner the inneressences of created beings, ceases from all movement.

60. He who for our sake shared in God's rest of the seventh day also for our sake participates in God's deifyingenergy on the eighth day, that is, in the mystical resurrection, and leaves lying in the sepulcher His linen clothesand the napkin that was about his head (cf John 20:6-7). Those who perceive this, like Peter and John, areconvinced that the Lord has risen.

61. The Lord's tomb stands equally either for this world or for the heart of each faithful Christian. The linen clothesare the inner essences of sensible things together with their qualities of goodness. The napkin is the simple andhomogeneous knowledge of intelligible realities, together with the vision of God, in so far as it is granted.Through these things the Logos is initially recognized, for without them any higher apprehension of what He iswould be altogether beyond our capacity.

62. Those who bury the Lord with honor will also see Him risen with glory, but He is not seen by anyone else. ForHe can no longer be apprehended by His enemies as He does not wear those outer coverings through which Heseemed to let Himself be captured by those who sought Him, and in which He endured suffering for thesalvation of all.

63. He who buries the Lord with honor is revered by all who love God. For he has not allowed the Lord's body,nailed to the cross, to be left exposed to the blasphemy of unbelievers, but has befittmgly delivered Him fromderision and insult. Those who sealed the tomb and set soldiers to watch (cf. Matt. 27:66) are hateful because oftheir scheming. When the Logos had risen, they slandered Him, saying that His body had been stolen away. Inthe same way, as they bribed the false disciple with silver to betray the Lord - by false disciple I mean apretence of holiness for the sake of display - so they bribed the soldiers to make a false accusation against therisen Savior. Whoever possesses spiritual knowledge knows the significance of what has been said, for he is notignorant of how and in how many ways the Lord is crucified, buried and rises again. Such a person makescorpses, as it were, of the impassioned

thoughts which have been insinuated by the demons into his heart, and which through the temptations they suggestcut in pieces the qualities of moral beauty as if they were garments (cf Matt. 27:35): and he breaks like seals theimpressions stamped deeply into his soul by the sins of prepossession.

64. Whenever a lover of riches who feigns virtue by an outward show of devotion finds he has procured thematerial possessions he desires, he repudiates the way of Me that made people think he was a disciple of theLogos.

65. When you see arrogant men not able to endure praise being given to others better than themselves, andcontriving to suppress the truth by denying it with countless insinuations and baseless slanders, you mustunderstand that the Lord is -again crucified by these men and buried and guarded with soldiers and seals. Butthe Logos rises afresh and puts them to confusion. The more the Logos is attacked, the more clearly He revealsHimself, as steeled in dis-passion through His sufferings. The Logos is stronger than all else: not only is Hecalled truth but He is truth.

66. The mystery of the incarnation of the Logos is the key to all the arcane symbolism and typology in theScriptures, and in addition gives us knowledge of created things, both visible and intelligible. He whoapprehends the mystery of the cross and the burial apprehends the inward essences of created things: while hewho is initiated into the inexpressible power of the resurrection apprehends the purpose for which God firstestablished everything.

67. All visible realities need the cross, that is, the state in which they are cut off from things acting upon themthrough the senses. All intelligible realities need burial, that is, the total quiescence of the things which act uponthem through the intellect. When all relationship with such things is severed, and their natural activity andstimulus is cut off, then the Logos, who exists alone in Himself, appears as if risen from the dead. Heencompasses all that comes from Him, but nothing enjoys kinship with Him by virtue of natural relationship.For the salvation of the saved is by grace and not by nature (cf. Eph. 2:5).

Ages, times and places belong to the category of relationship, and consequently no object necessarily associatedwith these things can be other than relative. But God transcends the category of relationship; for nothing elsewhatsoever is necessarily associated with

Him. Therefore if the inheritance of the saints is God Himself, he who is found worthy of this grace will he beyondall ages, times and places: he will have God Himself as his place, in accordance with the text, 'Be to me a God whois a defender and a fortified place of my salvation' (Ps. 71:3. LXX).

69. The consummation bears no resemblance whatsoever to the intermediary state, for otherwise it would not be aconsummation. The intermediary state consists of everything that is sequent to the origin but falls short of theconsummation. But if all ages, times and places, together with all that is necessarily associated with them, aresequent to God - since He is an unoriginate origin - and also fall far short of God - since He is an infiniteconsummation - then clearly they belong to the intermediary state. The consummation of those who are saved isGod; in this supreme consummation no trace of the intermediary state will be observed in those who have beensaved.

70. The whole world, limited as it is by its own inner principles, is called both the place and age of those dwellingin it. There are modes of contemplation natural to it which are able to engender in created beings a partialunderstanding of the wisdom of God that governs all things. So long as they make use of these modes to gainunderstanding, they cannot have more than a mediate and partial apprehension. But when what is perfectappears, what is partial is superseded: all mirrors and indistinct images pass away when truth is encounteredface to face (cf 1 Cor. 13:10-12). When he who is saved is perfected in God, he will transcend all worlds, agesand places in which hitherto he has been trained as a child.

71. Pilate is a type of the natural law: the Jewish crowd is a type of the written law. He who has not risen throughfaith above the two laws cannot therefore receive the truth which is beyond nature and expression. On thecontrary, he invariably crucifies the Logos, for he sees the Gospel either, like a Jew, as a stumbling-block or,like a Greek, as foolishness (cf. 1 Cor. 1:23).

72. When you see Herod and Pilate making friends with each other in order to destroy Jesus (cf. Luke 23:12), youmay discern in this the concurrence of the demons of unchastits' and self-esteem, who combine together to putto death the Logos of virtue and spiritual knowledge. For the demon of self-esteem, making a pretence ofspiritual knowledge, refers to the demon of unchastity, and

the demon of unchastity, putting on a hypocritical show of purity, refers back to the demon of self-esteem. Thus if issaid, 'When Herod had arrayed Jesus m a gorgeous robe, he seat Him again to PilateXLuke 23:11).

73. The intellect should not yield to the flesh or clmg to the passions. For, it is said, 'men do not gather figs fromlooms', that is, they do not gather virtue from the passions, 'nor do they gather grapes from a bramble bush' (cf.Matt. 7:16), that is, they do not gather from the flesh that spiritual knowledge which gladdens the heart.

74. An ascetic tested by the patient acceptance of trials and temptations, purified by bodily training, and perfectedby attention to the higher forms of contemplation, receives the blessings of divine grace. "For the Lord', saysMoses, 'came from Sinai." that is, from trials and temptations, 'and appeared to us from

Seir,' that is, frombodily hardships, 'and hastened down from mount Paran with ten thousands of Kadesh' (Deut. 33:2. LXX), thatis, from the mountain of faith with untold sacred knowledge.

75. Herod exemplifies the will of the flesh; Pilate, the senses; Caesar, sensible things; and the Jews, the soul'sthoughts. When the soul through ignorance associates with sensible things, it betrays the Logos into the handsof the senses to be put to death and proclaims within itself the kingship of perishable things. For the Jews say,'We have no king but Caesar' (John 19:15).

76. Again, Herod exemplifies the activity of the passions; Pilate, a disposition that is deluded by them; Caesar, theruler of the world of darkness; and the Jews, the soul. When the soul submits to the passions and betrays virtueinto the power of an evil disposition, it manifestly denies the kingdom of God and transfers itself to thedestructive tyranny of the devil.

77. The subjugation of the passions is not sufficient to ensure spiritual happiness for the soul unless the soul alsoacquires the virtues by keeping the commandments. Scripture says, 'Do not rejoice because the spirits aresubject to you,' that is, the operations of the passions, but 'because your names are written in heaven' (Luke10;20), having been transferred to the place of dispassion by the grace of sonship gained through the virtues.

78. Whoever possesses spiritual knowledge must always possess as well a rich store of virtue gained through hisconduct. Scripture

says, 'He who has a purse,' that is, spiritual knowledge, 'let him take it, and his knapsack as well' (Luke 22:36), thatis, the stoic from which he liberally

nourishes his soul with virtue. He who does not have a purse and a knapsack,that is, knowledge and virtue, 'let him sell his garment and buy a sword" (ibid.). By this Scripture means: let him

give his own flesh wiUingly to labors in pursuit of virtue, and for the sake of the peace of God let him wisely wagewar against passions and demons, that is, let him acquire the skill of discriminating in the word of God between thelower and the higher.

79. The Lord appeared when He was thirty years old, and with this number secretly teaches those with discernmentthe mysteries relating to Himself. For, mystically understood, the number thirty presents the Lord as the Creatorand provident ruler of time, nature, and the intelligible realities that lie beyond visible nature. The number sevensignifies that He is the Creator of time, for time has a sevenfold character. The number five signifies that He isthe Creator of nature, for nature has a fivefold character because of the fivefold division of the senses. Thenumber eight signifies that He is the Creator of intelligible realities, for intelligible realities come into beingoutside the cycle that is" measured by time. And the number ten signifies that He is the provident ruler, becauseit is the ten holy commandments that lead men towards perfection, and also because the symbol for ten^ is thefirst letter of the name taken by the Lord when He became man. By adding up five, seven, eight and ten youobtain the number thirty. Thus he who truly knows how to follow the Lord as his master will understand why,should he attain the age of thirty, he will also be empowered to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom. For whenthrough his ascetic practice he has irreproachably created the world of the virtues as if it were a world of visiblenature, not allowing his soul to be diverted from its course by the hostile powers as he passes through time; andwhen he unerringly gathers spiritual knowledge through contemplation, and is providentially able to engenderthe same state in others, then he himself, whatever his physical age, is thirty years old in spirit and makesmanifest in others the power of the blessings which he himself possesses.

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80. He who yields to the pleasures of the body is neither diligent in virtue nor readily receptive of spiritualknowledge. For this reason he has no one - that is, no mtelligent thought - to put him into the pool when the

water is disturbed (cf. John 5:7), that is, into a state of virtue capable of receiving spiritual knowledge and ofhealing every sickness. On the contrary, although sick, he procrastinates because of laziness and is forestalledby someone else, who prevents him from being cured. And so he lies there with his illness for thirty-eight years.He who does not contemplate the visible creation so as to discern God's glory in it, and does not reverentlyraise his inner vision to the noetic world, quite fittingly remains ill for the number of years specified. For thenumber thirty, understood with reference to nature, signifies the sensible world, while with reference to theascetic life it signifies the practice of the virtues. The number eight, understood mystically, denotes theintelligible nature of incorporeal beings, while understood in terms of spiritual knowledge it denotes thesupreme wisdom of theology. Whoever does not advance towards God by these means remains paralyzed untilthe Logos comes to teach him how he can obtain prompt healing, saying to him, 'Rise, take up your bed andwalk' (John 5:8); that is to say, the Logos commands him to upraise his intellect from the love of pleasurewhich dominates him, to shoulder the body of the virtues and to go home, that is, to heaven. Better that thehigher should raise the lower up to virtue on the shoulders of ascetic practice than that, through soft living, thelower should drag the higher down into self-indulgence.

81. Until our minds in purity have transcended our own being and that of all things sequent to God, we have not yetacquired a permanent state of holiness. When this noble state has, by means of love, been established in us, weshall know the power of the divine promise. For we must believe that where the intellect, taking the lead, has bymeans of love rooted its power, there the saints will find a changeless abode. He who has not transcendedhimself and all that is in any way subject to intellection, and has not come to abide in the silence beyondintellection, cannot be entirely free from change.

82. Every intellection has either a multiple or at least a dual aspect. For it is an intermediate relationship betweentwo extremes - an intellective being and an intelligible being - and links the one to the other. Hence neitherextreme can possess an absolute

simplicity. An intellective being is a subject/and so the capacity of apprehending some intelligible object isnecessarily associated with it. And an intelligible being necessarily either is a subject or exists in a subject: as asubject it possesses the intrinsic capacity of being apprehended by an intellective being; as existing in a subject itpresupposes a being in which it exists potentially. For no creature is in itself a simple being or intellection, in such away as to constitute an indivisible unity. Thus, if we call God a being, then the capacity to be apprehended by aprocess of intellection is not inherent in His nature, for if it were He would be composite. Or if we call Him anintellection, then He does not possess an essence with a natural capacity for being an intellective subject, but HeHimself is intellection in His very essence; the whole of God is intellection and intellection alone. But in terms ofintellection He is also being: the whole of God is being and being alone. And yet the whole of God is beyond beingand beyond intellection, because He is an indivisible unity, simple and without parts. Thus whoever, to whateverdegree, still apprehends by means of intellection has not yet transcended duality. But he who has advancedaltogether beyond intellection, and has renounced it because he has transcended it, has come to dwell to some extentin unity.

83. In the multiplicity of beings there is diversity, dissimilarity and difference. But in God, who is in an absolutesense one and alone, there is only identity,

simplicity and similarity. It is therefore not safe to devote oneself tothe contemplation of God before one has advanced beyond the multiplicity of beings. Moses showed this whenhe pitched the tent of his mind outside the camp (cf. Exod. 33:7) and then conversed with God. For it isdangerous to attempt to utter the inexpressible by means of the spoken word, for the spoken word involvesduality or more than duality. The surest way is to contemplate pure being silently in the soul alone, becausepure being is established in undivided unity and not among the multiplicity of things. The high priest, who wascommanded to go into the holy of holies within the veil only once every year (cf. Lev. 16; Heb. 9:7), shows usthat only he who has passed through what is immaterial and holy and has entered the holy of holies - that is,who has transcended the whole natural world of sensible and intelligible realities, is free from all that is specificto creatures and whose mind is unclad and naked - is able to attain the vision of God.

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84. When Moses pitches his tent outside the camp (cf. Exod. 33:7) - that is, when he estabhshes his wiU and mindoutside the world of visible things - he begins to worship God. Then, entering into the darkness (cf. Exod.20:21) - that is, into the formless and immaterial realm of spiritual knowledge - he there celebrates the mostsacred rites.

85. The darkness is that formless, immaterial and bodiless state which embraces the knowledge of the prototypes ofall created things. He who like another Moses enters into it, although mortal by nature, understands things thatare immortal. Through this knowledge he depicts in himself the beauty of divine excellence, as if painting apicture which is a faithful copy of archetypal beauty. Then he comes

down from the mountain and offershimself as an example to those who wish to imitate that excellence. In this way he manifests the love andgenerosity of the grace he has received.

86. Those who apply themselves with a pure heart to divine philosophy derive the greatest gain from the knowledgeit contains. For their will and purpose no longer change with circumstances, but readily and with firm assurancethey undertake all that conforms to the standard of holiness.

87. Baptized in Christ through the Spirit, we receive the first m-corruption accordmg to the flesh. Keepmg thisoriginal mcorruption spotless by giving ourselves to good works and by dying to our own will, we await thefinal mcorruption bestowed by Christ in the Spirit. No one who possesses this final incorruption fears the loss ofthe blessings he has obtained.

88. When God in His mercy resolved to send down from heaven the grace of His divine power to us on earth. Heestablished the sacred tabernacle with all its contents as a symbolical image, type and imitation of wisdom.

89. The grace of the New Testament is mystically hidden in the letter of the Old. That is why St Paul says that 'theLaw is spiritual" (Rom. 7:14). Thus the letter of the Law, superseded, grows old and decays (cf. Heb. 8:13),while its spirit, perpetually renewed, stays young. For grace is altogether immune from decay.

90. The Law is the shadow of the Gospel. The Gospel is the image of the blessings held in store. The Law checksthe actualization of evil. The Gospel brings about the realization of divine blessings.

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9L All sacred Scripture can be divided into flesh and spirit as if it were a spiritual man. For the literal sense ofScripture is flesh and its inner meaning is soul or spirit. Clearly someone wise abandons what is comiptible andunites his whole being to what is incorruptible.

92. The Law is the flesh of the spiritual man who here corresponds to sacred Scripture: the prophets are the senses;the Gospel is the noetic soul that functions through the flesh of the Law and the senses of the prophets,revealing its power in its actions.

93. The Law is a shadow and the prophets are an image of the divine and spiritual blessings contained in theGospel. The truth itself, foreshadowed in the Law and prefigured in the prophets, is revealed in the Gospel asnow present to us through actual events.

94. He who fulfils the Law in his private and public life only abstains from the actual commission of sin, sacrificingto God the outward fulfillment of his mindless passions. He is satisfied with this manner of seeking salvationbecause of his spiritual immaturity.

95. He 'who has been trained by the prophets' words not only refrains from the outward fulfillment of the passionsbut also renounces all assent to them in his soul. He is not content simply to appear to abstain from sin in theinferior part of himself, the flesh, while secretly allowing its free rein in his superior part, the soul.

96. He who has truly embraced the life of the Gospel has made himself immune to both the promptings andperformance of evil, and pursues every virtue in action and thought. He offers a sacrifice of praise andthanksgiving (cf. Ps. 116:17), for he has been set free from all disturbance produced by the passions and

liberated from mental warfare against them: and he feeds his soul with the hope of the blessings held in store,his one unquenchable delight.

97. To the more diligent students of Holy Scripture the Lord is clearly shown as having two forms. The first iscommon and more popular, and it can be perceived by many. The text 'We saw Him and He had no comelinessor beauty' (Isa. 53:2. LXX) refers to this form. The second is more hidden, and it can be perceived only by afew, that is, by those who have already become like the holy apostles

Peter and John, before whom the Lordwas transfigured with a glory that overwhelmed the senses (cf. Matt. 17:2). The

text 'Thou art fairer than the children of men' (Ps. 45:2) refers to this form. The first of these two forms is consonantto beginners; the second to those perfected in spiritual knowledge, in so far as such perfection is possible. The first isan image of the Lord's mitial advent, to which the literal meaning of the Gospel refers, and which by means ofsuffering purifies those practicing the virtues. The second prefigures the second and glorious advent, in which thespirit of the Gospel is apprehended, and which by means of wisdom transfigures and deifies those imbued withspiritual knowledge: because of the transfiguration of the Logos within them 'they reflect with unveiled face theglory of the Lord' (2 Cor. 3:18).

98. He who endures suffering for the sake of virtue, without being shaken in his resolve, is inspired by the firstadvent of the Logos, which cleanses him from all defilement. He who through contemplation has raised hisintellect to the angelic state possesses the power of the second advent, which produces in him dispassion andincorruptibility.

99. Sense-perception pertains to the ascetic who is struggling to attain the virtues through enduring hardships.

Freedom from sense-perception pertains to the contemplative who draws his intellect away from the flesh andthe world and concentrates it on God. The first, in his ascetic struggle to loosen the natural bond linking the soulto the flesh,

constantly submits his will to the hardships he undergoes. The second, who has broken that bondthrough contemplation, is not held back by anything at all: he has already freed himself from the domination ofthose who try to overpower him.

100.The manna which was given to Israel in the desert (cf. Exod. 16:14-35) is the Logos of God. Those who eat itfind that it supplies every spiritual delight. It is blended to suit every taste in accordance with the differentdesires of those who eat it, for it has the quality of every kind of spiritual food. Thus, to those who through theSpirit have been bom from above by means of incorruptible seed (cf John 3:3-5), it comes as pure spiritualmilk (cf. 1 Pet. 2:2); to the weak it comes as vegetables (cf. Rom. 14:2) sustaining the soul's passible aspect; tothose in whom the soul's organs of perception have been trained by long practice to distinguish between goodand evil it serves as solid food (cf. Heb. 5:14). The Logos of God also has other infinite powers which cannot beencompassed in this world. If at death a man is worthy to be put in

charge of many things or all things because in this world he has been faithful in small things (cf Matt. 25:21), hewill also receive all or some of these other powers of the Logos. For the most exalted of the divine gifts of gracebestowed in this world is scant and minimal compared with those that are held in store for us.

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1. God is one because there is one Divinity: unoriginate, simple, beyond being, without parts, indivisible. TheDivinity is both unity and trinity - wholly one and wholly three. It is wholly one in respect of the essence,wholly three in respect of the hypostases or persons. For the Divinity is Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and is inFather, Son and Holy Spirit. The whole Divinity is in the whole Father and the whole Father is in the wholeDivinity. The whole Divinity is in the whole Son and the whole Son is in the whole Divinity. The wholeDivinity is m the whole Holy Spirit and the whole Holy Spirit is in the whole Divinity. The whole Divinity isboth Father and in the whole Father; the whole Father is in the whole Divinity and the whole Divinity is thewhole Father. The whole Son is in the whole Divinity and the whole Divinity is in the whole Son; the wholeSon is both the whole Divinity and in the whole Divinity. The whole Divinity is both the Holy Spirit and in thewhole Holy Spirit; and the whole Holy Spirit is both the whole Divinity and in the whole Divinity. For theDivinity is not partially in the Father, nor is the Father part of God. The Divinity is not partially in the Son, noris the Son part of God. The Divinity is not partially in the Holy Spirit, nor is the Holy Spirit part of God. For theDivinity is not divisible; nor is the Father, or the Son, or the Holy Spirit incomplete God. On the contrary, thewhole and complete Divinity is completely in the complete Father; the whole and complete Divinity iscompletely in the complete Son; and the whole and complete Divinity is completely in the complete Holy Spirit.For the whole Father is completely in the whole Son and Spirit; and the whole Son is completely in the wholeFather and Spirit; and the whole Holy Spirit is completely in the whole Father and Son. Therefore the Father,the Son and the Holy Spirit are one God. The essence, power and energy of the Father, the Son and the

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Holy Spirit are one, for none of the hypostases or persons either exists or is inteUigible without the others.

2. Every inteUection involves both an intellect that apprehends and an intelligible being that is apprehended. ButGod is neither an apprehending intellect nor an intelligible being: He transcends both. For if He were anapprehending intellect He would be limited by His need for a relationship with an intelligible being: and if Hewere an intelligible being He would be limited because naturally subject to an apprehending intellect capable ofgrasping Him. It follows therefore that God is not to be conceived as either an intellect or an intelligible being,and that He is beyond both intellection and intelligibility. Intellection and intelligibility appertain by nature towhat is sequent to God.

3. Every intellection inheres as a quality in an apprehending being; and its activity is directed towards a beingendowed with qualities. For no intellection can be directed towards a being that is absolutely independent,simple and self-subsistent, since the intellection itself is not independent and simple. But God is in both respectsabsolutely simple: in so far as He is being. He is independent of any apprehending subject; in so far as He isintellection. He is independent of any apprehensible object. Thus God is neither an intelligible object nor anintellective subject, for He clearly transcends both being and intellection.

4. The centre of a circle is regarded as the indivisible source of all the radii extending from it; similarly, by meansof a certain simple and indivisible act of spiritual knowledge, the person found worthy to dwell in God willperceive pre-existmg in God all the inner essences of created things.

5. When intellection is given form through its apprehension of intelligible objects, it ceases to be single andbecomes many intellections; for it is marked by the form of each intelligible object that it apprehends. But as itpasses beyond the multiplicity of the sensible and intelligible things that in this way confer their manifold formsupon it, it becomes altogether free from form. It is now that the Logos, who is beyond intellection, unitesHimself to it and makes it His own, givmg it rest from those things which by nature change and diversity it withthe

many conceptual forms that they impose upon it. He who experiences this has rested from his works, just asGod did from His (cf Gen. 2:2; Heb. 4:10).

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6. He who reaches such perfection as is attainable by men in this world offers to God the fruits of love, joy, peaceand long-suffering (cf Gal. 5:22), and will in the age to be offer those of incorruptibility, eternity and similargifts. The first qualities may be found in the man perfect in the practice of virtues; the second in the man whothrough trae spiritual knowledge has passed beyond the world of created things.

7. Just as the result of disobedience is sin, so the result of obedience is virtue. And just as disobedience leads tobreaking the commandments and to separation from Him who gave them, so obedience leads to keeping thecommandments and to union with Him who gave them. Thus he who through obedience has kept thecommandments has achieved righteousness and, moreover, he has not cut himself off from union in love withHim who gave them; and the opposite is equally true.

8. If you are healed of the breach caused by the fall, you are severed first from the passions and then fromimpassioned thoughts. Next you are severed from nature and the inner principles of nature, then fromconceptual images and the knowledge relating to them. Lastly, when you have passed through the manifoldprinciples relating to divine providence, you attain through unknowing the very principle of divine unity. Thenthe intellect contemplates only its own immutability, and rejoices with an unspeakable joy because it hasreceived the peace of God which transcends all intellect and which ceaselessly keeps him

who has been grantedit from falling (cf Phil. 4:7).

9. Fear of hell causes beginners to shun evil. Desire to be rewarded with divine blessings confers on those who areadvancing a readiness to practice the virtues. But the mystery of love transcends all created beings and makesthe intellect blind to all that is sequent to God. Only upon those who have become blind to all that is sequent toHim does the Lord bestow wisdom, showing them what is more divine.

10. The Logos of God is like a grain of mustard seed (cf. Matt. 13:31): before cultivation it looks extremely small,but when; cultivated in the right way it grows so large that the highest principles of both sensible andintelligible creation come like birds to revive themselves in it. For the principles or inner essences of all thingsare embraced by the Logos, but the Logos is not embraced by any

thing. Hence the Lord has said that he who has faith as a grain of mustard seed can move a mountain by a word ofcommand (cf. Matt. 17:20), that is, he can destroy the devil's dominion over us and remove it from its foundation.

11. The grain of mustard seed is the Lord, who by faith is sown spiritually in the hearts of those who accept Him.He who diligently cultivates the seed by practicing the virtues moves the mountain of earth-bound pride and,through the power he has gained, he expels from himself the obdurate habit of sin. In this way he revives inhimself the activity of the principles and qualities or divine powers present in the commandments, as thoughthey were birds.

12. Let us build on the Lord, as though on a foundation of faith, with gold, silver and precious stones, raising atemple of holiness (cf. 1 Cor. 3:12). Let us build, that is to say, with pure undebased theology, with a way of lifethat is lucid and radiant, with divine thoughts and conceptual images more precious than jewels. Let us not usewood, hay or stubble, that is, idolatry - which is a passionate desire for sensible things - or a meaningless way oflife, or thoughts which are impassioned and as empty of wise understanding as straw.

13. If a man seeks spiritual knowledge, let him plant the foundations of his soul immovably before the Lord, inaccordance with God's words to Moses: 'Stand here by Me' (Deut. 5:31). But it should be realized that there aredifferences among those who stand before the Lord, as is clear from the text, "There are some standing herewho will not taste death till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power' (Mark 9:1). For the Lorddoes not always appear in glory to all who stand before Him. To beginners He appears in the form of a servant(cf. Phil. 2:7); to those able to follow Him as He climbs the high mountain of His transfiguration He appears inthe form of God (cf. Matt. 17: 1-9), the form in which He existed before the world came to be (cf. John 17:5). Itis therefore possible for the same Lord not to appear in the same way to all who stand before Him, but to appearto some in one way and to others in another way, according to the measure of each person's faith.

14. When the Logos of God becomes manifest and radiant in us, and His face shines like the sun, then His clotheswill also look white (cf. Matt. 17:2). That is to say, the words of the Gospels

will then be clear and distinct with nothing concealed. And Moses said Elijah - the more-spiritual principles of theLaw and the prophets - will also be present

with Him.

15. It is written that the Son of Man is coming 'with His angels in the glory of the Father' (Matt. 16:17). Similarly,in those found worthy, the Logos of God is transfigured to the degree to which each has advanced in holiness,and He comes to them with His angels in the glory of the Father. For the more spiritual principles in the Lawand the prophets - symbolized by Moses and Elijah when they appeared with the Lord at His transfiguration -manifest their glory according to the actual receptive capacity of those to whom it is revealed.

16. He who to some degree has been initiated into the inner principle of the divine unity invariably discovers theinner principles of divine providence and judgment conjoined with it. That is why, like St Peter, he thinks itgood that three tabernacles should be made withm himself for those who have appeared to him (cf. Matt. 17:4).These tabernacles represent three stages of salvation, namely that of virtue, that of spiritual knowledge and thatof theology. The first requires fortitude and self-restraint in the practice of the virtues: of this the type wasElijah. The second requires right discernment in natural contemplation: Moses disclosed this in his own person.The third requires the consummate perfection of wisdom: this was revealed by the Lord. They were calledtabernacles, or temporary dwellings, because beyond them there are other still more excellent and splendidstages, through which those found worthy will pass in the age to be.

17. A man engaged in the practice of the virtues is said to be "sojourning' in the flesh (cf. Gen. 12:10), for bypracticing the virtues he is severing the soul's relationship with the flesh and stripping from himself the deceitof material things. A man of spiritual knowledge is said to be sojourning in virtue itself, for he stillcontemplates the trath indistinctly, as though in a mirror (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12): he has not yet enjoyed a face-to-facevision of the self-subsistent forms of goodness, seeing them as they are in them-selves. For as regards theblessings of the age to be, every saint does no more than walk in the image of them, crying, 'I am a stranger anda sojourner as all my fathers were' (Ps. 39:12).

18. He who prays must never stand still on the steep ascent that

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leads to God. just as he has to progress upwards from strength to strength in the practice of the virtues (cf. Ps. 84:5-7) and to rise in his contemplation of spiritual truths from glory to glory (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18), and to pass from the letterto the spirit of Holy Scripture, so he must advance in a similar manner within the realm of prayer. He must raise hisintellect and the resolve of his soul from what is human to what is divine, so that his intellect can follow Jesus theSon of God, who has passed through the heavens (cf. Heb. 4:14) and who is everywhere. For He has passed throughall things for us by the dispensation of His incarnation, so that we, by following Him, may pass through all that issequent to Him and so come to be with Him, provided we apprehend Him not according to the limitations to whichHe accommodated Himself in His incarnation but according to the majesty of His natural infinitude.

19. We should always devote ourselves to God and seek Him out as we have been commanded (cf. Matt. 6:33).Although when we seek Him in this present stage of life we cannot come to the limit of His depth, yet perhapsif we penetrate His depth even slightly we shall contemplate what is more holy than the holy and more spiritualthan the spiritual. The high priest shows this to us typologically when he goes from the holy place, which isholier than the court, into the holy of holies, which is holier than the holy place (cf. Lev. 16).

20. The whole Logos of God is neither diffuse nor prolix but is a unity embracing a diversity of principles, each ofwhich is an aspect of the Logos. Thus he who speaks about the truth, however fully he deals with his subject,speaks always about the one Logos of God.

21. Since Christ is God and the Logos of the Father, 'the fullness of the Godhead dwells bodily in Him' in a mannerthat is according to essence (Col. 2:9). The fullness of the Godhead dwells in us by grace when we gather intoourselves all virtue and wisdom, a wisdom which, so far as this is possible in man, does not in

any way fallshort of a faithful imitation of the divine archetype. For it is not incongruous that, by virtue of our relationshipwith the Logos, the fullness of the Godhead, embracing a diversity of spiritual principles, should come to dwell

also in us.

22. The thought which springs naturally from our intellect is a messenger of the intellect's hidden activity.Similarly He who is in essence the Logos of God and knows the Father as a thought knows

the intellect which conceives it, reveals the Father whom He knows, no creature being able to approach the Fatherwithout Him. That is why he is called 'Messenger of great counsel' (Isa. 9:6 LXX).

23. The great counsel of God the Father is the unspoken and unknown mystery of the divine dispensation. This theonly-begotten Son revealed through His incarnation, when He became the Messenger of the great pre-etemalcounsel of God the Father. He who knows the inner principle of the mystery becomes a messenger of the greatcounsel of God, and he is exalted unceasingly by action and thought through all things until he encounters Himwho has to a corresponding degree descended towards him.

24. The Logos of God providentially descended for our sakes into the lower parts of the earth, and also ascended farabove all the heavens (cf. Eph. 4:9-10), even though by nature He is entirely unmoving. Since through theincarnation the Logos has already accomplished in Himself as man all that is to be, let him who delights inspiritual knowledge rejoice inwardly as he considers the consummation promised to those who love the Lord.

25. If the divine Logos of God the Father became son of man and man so that He might make men gods and thesons of God, let us believe that we shall reach the realm where Christ Himself now is: for He is the head of thewhole body (cf. Col. 1:18), and endued with our humanity has gone to the Father as forerunner on our behalf.God will stand 'm the midst of the congregation of gods' (Ps. 82:1. LXX) - that is, of those who are saved -distributing the rewards of that realm's blessedness to those found worthy to receive them, not separated fromthem by any space.

26. He who still satisfies the impassioned appetites of the flesh dwells in the land of the Chaldeans as a maker andworshipper of idols. But when he has begun to discern what the situation is and has gained some insight into themode of life which nature demands, he leaves the land of the Chaldeans and comes to Haran in Mesopotamia(cf. Gen. 11:31). By Haran I mean that intermediate state between virtue and vice - a state not yet purified fromthe delusion of the senses. But if he goes beyond that moderate understanding of goodness which he hasattained through the senses, he will hasten towards the blessed land, that is, to the state free from all sin andignorance which God, who does not lie, manifests to those who love Him, promising to give it to them as areward for their virtue.

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27. If for our sakes the Logos of God "died on the Cross in weakness" and was raised 'by the power of God' (2 Cor.13:4), then in a spiritual sense He is always doing and suffering this on our account, becoming all things to allmen so that He might save all men (cf 1 Cor. 9:22). Thus, since the Corinthians were weak, while with them StPaul rightly "decided to know nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2). But since theEphesians were perfect, he wrote to

them that God 'has raised us up in union with Christ Jesus and enthroned uswith Him in the heavenly realm' (Eph. 2:6), thus affirming that the Logos of God adapts Himself according toeach person's strength. In this way. He is crucified for those taking their first steps in the ascetic life, and Henails their impassioned energies to the cross with divine fear. He rises again and ascends into heaven for thosewho have put off the whole of their fallen selfhood, corrupted by the desires of deceitfulness (cf. Eph. 4:22);who have been entirely renewed through the Holy Spirit as man created in the image of God (cf. Eph. 4:24); andwho draw near to the Father through His grace which is in them, and so are raised 'far above every principality,power, might and dominion, and above every name that is named not only in this age but also in the age tocome' (Eph. 1:21). For all things, all names and dignities sequent to God, are likewise inferior to him whothrough grace dwells in God.

28. Before His visible advent in the flesh the Logos of God dwelt among the patriarchs and prophets in a spiritualmanner, prefiguring the mysteries of His advent. After His incarnation He is present in a similar way not only tothose who are still beginners, nourishing them spiritually and leading them towards the maturity of divine

perfection, but also to the perfect, secretly pre-delineating in them the features of His future advent as if in an

29. Just as the teachings of the Law and the prophets, being harbingers of the coming advent of the Logos in theflesh, guide our souls to Christ (cf Gal. 3:24), so the glorified incarnate Logos of God is Himself a harbinger ofHis spiritual advent, leading our souls forward by His own teachings to receive His divine and manifest advent.He does this ceaselessly, by means of the virtues converting those found worthy from the flesh to the spirit. AndHe will do it at the end of the age, making manifest what has hitherto been hidden from all men.

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30. As long as I remain imperfect and refractory, neither obeying God by practicing the commandments norbecoming perfect in spiritual knowledge, Christ from my point of view also appears imperfect and refractorybecause of me.: For I diminish and cripple Him by not growing in spirit with Him, since I am "the body ofChrist and one of its members' (1 Cor. 12:27).

31. 'The sun rises and the sun sets', says Scripture (Eccles. 1:5). Likewise the Logos appears sometimes as risenand sometimes as set, depending on the manner of life and the spiritual status and essence or quality of thosepursuing virtue and searching for divine knowledge. Blessed is he who like Joshua (cf Josh. 10:12-13) keepsthe Sun of righteousness from setting in himself throughout the whole day of this present life, not allowing it tobe blotted out by the dusk of sin and ignorance. In this way he will truly be able to put to flight the cunningdemons that rise up against him.

32. When the Logos of God is raised up in us by our practice of the virtues and by contemplation. He draws allthings to Himself (cf. John 12:32); He sanctifies in virtue and spiritual knowledge our thoughts and words aboutthe flesh, the soul and the nature of beings: He sanctifies also the very members of our bodies and our senses,and He places them all under His yoke. So let the visionary of divine things eagerly ascend in pursuit of theLogos until he reaches the place where He is. For, as Ecclesiastes puts it. He "draws to His place' (Eccles. 1:5)all those who follow Him, and as the great High Priest He brings them into the Holy of Holies, where He

Himself, who became as we are, has entered as a forerunner on our behalf (cf. Heb. 6:20).

33. He who devoutly strives to attain wisdom and is on his guard against the invisible powers, should pray that bothnatural discrimination - whose light is but limited - and the illuminating grace of the Spirit abide with him. Thefirst by means of practice trains the flesh in virtue, the second illuminates the intellect so that it chooses aboveall else companionship with wisdom; and through wisdom it destroys the strongholds of evil and pulls down "allthe self-esteem that exalts itself against the knowledge of God' (2 Cor. 10:5). Joshua exemplifies this both

whenhe prays for the sun to stand still upon Gibeon, that is, for the light of the knowledge of God to remain unsettingas it shines for him over the mountain of spiritual contemplation; and when he asks for the moon to stand still in

the valley, that is, for the natural discrimination which watches over the weak flesh to remain changelessly weddedto virtue (cf Josh. 10:12-13).

34. Gibeon is the spiritual intellect. The valley is the flesh humbled by death. The sun is the Logos, who illuminesthe intellect, supplying it with the power of contemplation and delivering it from all ignorance. The moon is thenatural law, which persuades the flesh duly to submit to the spirit and accept the yoke of the commandments.The moon is the symbol of nature because of its mutability; but among the saints it remains immutable, for inthem the state of virtue is unchanging.

35. Those who seek the Lord should not look for Him outside themselves; on the contrary, they must seek Himwithin themselves through faith made manifest in action. For He is near you: 'The word is ... in your mouth andin your heart, that is, the word of faith' (Rom. 10:8) - Christ being Himself the word that is sought.

36. When we think of the height of God's infinity we should not despair of His compassion reaching us from such aheight; and when we recall the infinite depth of our fall through sin we should not refuse to believe that thevirtue which has been killed in us will rise again. For God can accomplish both these things: He can come down

and illumine our intellect with spiritual knowledge, and He can raise up the virtue within us and exalt it withHimself through works of righteousness. For it

is written: 'Do not say in your heart, 'Who shall ascend intoheaven?' - that is, to bring Christ down - or, 'Who shall descend into the depths?" - that is, to bring Christ upagain from the dead' (Rom. 10:6-7). Interpreted in another way, the depths stand for all that is sequent to God,in the whole of which the whole divine Logos providentially comes to dwell, as life returning to what is dead.For all things whose life depends upon their participation in life are in themselves dead. And heaven stands forGod's natural hiddenness, whereby He is incomprehensible to all things. Alternatively, if anyone explainsheaven as the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, and the depths as the mystery of the incarnation, he will not, I think,be far from the mark. For it is hard to grasp the meaning of either doctrine through rational demonstration; orrather, their meaning is altogether inaccessible unless explored with faith.

37. In the life of ascetic practice the Logos, adapted to the cor-

poreal action of the virtues, becomes flesh (cf John 1:14). In the contemplative life the Logos, refined by conceptualimages that are spiritual, becomes what He was in His principial state, the Logos that was God and was with God(cf John 1:1-2).

38. If you expound the teaching of the Logos from the standpoint of the moral life, using relatively materialisticwords and examples which correspond to the capacity of your hearers, you make the Logos flesh. Conversely, ifyou elucidate mystical theology by means of the higher forms of contemplation you make the Logos spirit.

39. If you theologize in an affirmative or cataphatic manner, starting from positive statements about God, you makethe Logos flesh, for you have no other means of knowing God as cause except from what is visible and tangible.If you theologize in a negative or apophatic manner, through the stripping away of positive attributes, you makethe Logos spirit or God as He was in His principial state with God: starting from absolutely none of the thingsthat can be known, you come in an admirable way to know Him who transcends unknowing.

40. When like the patriarchs we learn to dig wells of virtue and spiritual knowledge within ourselves by means ofascetic practice and contemplation, we will find within us Christ the spring of life (cf. Gen. 26:15-18). Wisdomcommands us to drink from this spring, saying, 'Drink water from your own pitchers and from the spring ofyour own wells' (Prov. 5:15). If we do this we shall find that the treasures of wisdom truly are within us.

41. Those who animal-like live solely according to the senses make the Logos flesh for themselves in a dangerousway: they misuse God's creation in order to indulge the passions. They do not understand the principle of thatwisdom which is revealed to all: that we should know and praise God through His creation and that by means ofthe visible world we should understand whence we came, what we are, for what purpose we were made andwhere we are going. On the contrary, they travel through this present age in darkness, fumbling with both handsmerely their ignorance of God.

42. Those who abide solely by the letter of Holy Scripture and tie down the dignity of the soul to the externalworship of the Law make the Logos flesh for themselves in a reprehensible manner. They think that God will bepleased with sacrifices of dumb animals. They

pay much attention to the body with outward purifications but neglect the soul's beauty, stained as it is by thepassions. But it was for the soul that every power of the visible world was brought forth and that every divineteaching and law was proclaimed.

43. 'For the fall and resurrection of many in Israel is the Lord appointed', says the Holy Gospel (Luke 2:34). Weshould ask consequently whether He may not be appointed for the fall of those who contemplate the visiblecreation solely according to the senses and of those who stick to the mere letter of Holy Scripture, not beingable in their folly to go further and grasp the new spirit of grace. And we should ask whether He may not beappointed for the resurrection of those who contemplate God's creatures and listen to His words in a spiritualmanner, cultivating in appropriate ways only the divine image that is within the soul.

44. If the Lord's being appointed for the faU and resurrection of many is understood in the right way, then the faUwill refer to that of the passions and of evil thoughts in each of the faithful, and the resurrection to that of thevirtues and of every thought that enjoys God's blessing.

45. Those who think of the Lord only as the creator of things which are generated and which decay mistake Him, asMary Magdalene did, for the gardener. It is therefore for their own good that the Master avoids contact withsuch persons, saying, 'Do not touch Me' (John 20:17); for they are not yet capable of ascending with Him to theFather. He knows that those who are predisposed to think of Him in such mean terms will suffer harm if theydraw near to Him.

46. The people assembled in Galilee in the upper room with the doors locked for fear of the Jews are those who,having safely reached the height of divine contemplation in the land of revelations and having shut their senseslike doors for fear of the spirits of evil, receive the presence of the divine Logos of God in a way that cannot beconceived. He is revealed to them without the activity of their senses; through His words 'Peace be with you'He bestows dispassion on them, and breathing on them He grants them participation in the Holy Spirit, givingthem power to combat evil spirits and showing them the signs of His mysteries (cf John 20:19-22; Mark 16:17-18).

47. The Lord does not ascend to the Father for those who explore[V2] 149

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divine truth with their faculties as they are in their fallen state; but He does ascend to the Father for those who seekout the truth in the Spirit by means of the higher forms of contemplation. The Logos came down out of love for us.Let us not keep Him down permanently, but let us go up with Him to the Father, leaving the earth and earthly thingsbehind, lest He say to us what He said to the Jews because of their stubbornness: 'I go where you cannot come'(John 8:21). For without the Logos it is impossible to approach the Father of the Logos.

48. The land of the Chaldeans is a way of life dominated by the passions, in which the idols of sins are fashionedand worshipped. Mesopotamia, the land between the rivers, is a way of life that vacillates between opposites.The promised land is a state filled with every blessing. Everyone, then, who like ancient Israel neglects thisstate, loses the freedom which he has been granted, and allows himself once more to be dragged off into slaveryto the passions.

49. It should be noted that none of the saints went down to Babylon of his own accord. For it would be inept andinane for those who love God to choose what is bad rather than what is good. If some of them were taken thereby force along with the people (cf. 2 Kings 25, 2 Chron. 36), they are to be understood as those who, notpremeditatedly but at a time of crisis, and for the sake of saving those who needed their help, abandoned theirabsorption in the higher principle of spiritual knowledge in order to give instruction concerning the passions.For this reason St Paul felt that he would be more useful if he was in the flesh - that is, engaged in giving moralinstruction to the disciples - although his whole desire was to be set free from moral teaching and to be withGod (cf. Phil. 1:23) through pure intellectual contemplation which transcends the world.

50. When Saul was being choked by an evil spirit, David sang to the accompaniment of the harp and gave himrelief (cf 1 Sam. 16:14-23). In a similar manner every spiritual discourse, sweetened with mysticalcontemplation, brings

relief to the intellect possessed by evil spirits and frees it from the bad conscience whichchokes it.

51 David's glowing complexion and beautiful eyes (cf. 1 Sam. 16:12. LXX) signify a man in whom the splendor ofa holy way of life is enriched by the presence of the principle of spiritual

knowledge. In this state ascetic practice and contemplation go together. Ascetic practice is given luster by thequalities of the virtues: contemplation is illumined by divine conceptual images.

52. The reign of Saul is an image of the external worship of the Law, which the Lord abolished because it perfectednothing. 'For the Law', says Scripture, 'made nothing perfect' (Heb. 7:19). But the reign of the great Davidprefigures the worship set forth m the Gospel, for it enshrines to perfection God's most intimate purposes.

53. Saul is the natural law originally established by the Lord to rule over nature. But Saul was disobedient: hespared Agag, king of Amaiek (cf 1 Sam. 15:8 - 16:13), that is, the body, and slipped downward into the sphereof the passions. He was therefore deposed so that David might take over Israel. David is the law of the Spirit -the law engendering that peace which so excellently builds for God the temple of contemplation.

54. Samuel signifies obedience to God. So long as the principle of obedience exercises its priest-like office withinus, even though Saul spares Agag - that is, the earthly will - yet that principle in its zeal will put him to death(cf. 1 Sam. 15:33): it strikes the sin-incited intellect and puts it to shame for having

transgressed the divineordinances.

55. When the intellect scorns the teaching which purifies it from the passions, and ceases to examine what shouldbe done and what should not be done, it will through ignorance inevitably be overcome by the passions. As theintellect gradually comes to be separated from God, it is more and more involved in difficulties not of its ownchoosing. Obeying the demons, it makes a god of the belly and tries to find relief there from what oppresses it.Let Saul convince you of the truth of this: because he did not take Samuel for an adviser in all things heinevitably turned to idolatry, putting his trust in a ventriloquist and consulting her as if she were a god (cf. 1Sam. 28 : 7-20).

56. He who asks to receive his daily bread (cf. Matt. 6:11) does not automatically receive it in its fullness as it is initself: he receives it according to his own capacity as recipient. The Bread of Life (cf. John 6:35) gives Himselfin His love to all who ask, but not in the same way to all: for He gives Himself more fully to those who haveperformed great acts of righteousness, and in smaller measure to

those who have not achieved so much. He gives Himseh'to each person according to that person's spiritual ability toreceive Him.

57. Sometimes the Lord is absent from us; at other times He is present within us. He is absent when we contemplateHim indistinctly, as though in a mirror. He is present within us when we contemplate Him face to face (cf. 1Cor. 13:12).

58. For the man living the life of ascetic practice the Lord is present through the virtues; but He is absent from theman who does not bother about virtue.

Similarly, for a man engaged in the contemplative life. He is present ingenuine knowledge of created beings, but absent when there is some lapse from this.

59. When a man passes from the life of ascetic practice to the stage of spiritual knowledge, he is absent from theflesh (cf. 2 Cor. 5:8). Caught up as on clouds by the more lofty conceptual images into the translucent air ofmystical contemplation, he is able to 'be with the Lord for ever' (1 Thess. 4:17). A man 'is absent from theLord' (2 Cor. 5:6) if he is not yet able to contemplate his conceptual images of things with a pure intellect freefrom the operations of the senses (so far as this is possible), and if he cannot yet embrace the knowledge of theLord in its true simplicity, without the help of symbols.

60. The Logos of God is called flesh not only inasmuch as He became incarnate, but in another sense as well. WhenHe is contemplated in His true simplicity, in His prmcipial state with God the Father (cf. John 1:1-2), althoughHe embraces the models of the truth of all things in a distinct and naked manner. He does not contain withinHimself parables, symbols and stories needing allegorical interpretation. But when He draws near to men whocannot with the naked intellect come into contact with noetic realities in their naked state. He selects thingswhich are familiar to them, combining together various stories, symbols, parables and dark sayings; and in thisway He becomes flesh. Thus at the first encounter our intellect comes into contact not with the naked Logos butwith the incarnate Logos, that is, with various sayings and stories. The incarnate Logos, though Logos bynature, is flesh in appearance. Hence most people think they see flesh and not the Logos, although in fact He isthe Logos. The intellect-that is, the inner meaning-of Scripture is other than what it seems to most people. Forthe Logos becomes flesh in each of the recorded sayings.

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61. The initial stages of learning about religious devotion are naturally related to the flesh. For in our first encounterwith religion we come into contact with the letter and not the spirit. But as we get nearer to the spirit and refinethe materiality of words with the more subtle forms of contemplation, we come to dwell - so far as this ispossible for man — purely in the pure Christ, so that we can say with St Paul, 'Though we have known Christaccording to the flesh, now we no longer know Him in this manner' (2 Cor. 5:16). That is to say, we no longerknow Him according to the flesh because, through the intellect's naked encounter with the Logos stripped of theveils covering Him, we have advanced from knowing Him according to the flesh to knowing His 'glory as ofthe only-begotten Son of the Father' (John 1:14).

62. He who is living the life in Christ has gone beyond the righteousness of both the Law and nature. This St Paulindicated when he said, 'For in Christ Jesus there is neither circumcision nor uncircumcision' (cf. Gal. 5:6). Bycircumcision he meant righteousness according to the Law; by uncircumcision he hinted at natural justice, orequity.

63. Some are reborn through water and the spirit (cf. John 3:5); others receive baptism in the Holy Spirit and in fire(cf. Matt. 3:11). 1 take these four things - water, spirit, fire and Holy Spirit - to mean one and the same Spirit ofGod. To some the Holy Spirit is water because He cleanses the external stains of their bodies. To others He issimply spirit because He makes them active in the practice of virtue. To others He is fire because He cleansesthe interior defilement which lies deep within their souls. To others, according to Daniel, He is Holy Spiritbecause He bestows on them wisdom and spiritual knowledge (cf. Dan. 1:17; 5:11-12). For the single identicalSpirit takes His different names from the different ways in which He acts on each person.

64. The Law instituted the Sabbath, says Scripture, so that your ox and your servant might rest (cf. Exod. 20:10).Both of these are symbols for the body. For the person engaged in the practice of the virtues, the body is an oxunder the yoke of his intellect: it is forced to bear the burdens imposed in the ascetic life through the exercisingof the virtues. For the contemplative the body is the servant of his intellect, because through contemplation it isnow endowed with intelligence and so serves the intellect's spiritual commands

intelligently. For both the ox and the servant the Sabbath signifies the final goal pursued by them throughout theascetic and the contemplative life, and so it provides for both of them a fitting rest.

65. The man who attains virtue together with a consonant spiritual knowledge treats his body as an ox: with hisintelligence he steers it to do what has to be done. The life of active virtue is his servant - the life whichnaturally gives rise to virtue and which is acquired through the exercise of discrimination as if bought withmoney. The Sabbath is a virtuous, dispassionate and peaceful condition of both body and soul. It is anunchanging state.

66. For those still mainly concerned with the bodily forms of virtue, the Logos of God becomes hay and straw,sustaining the passible aspect of their souls and guiding it to the service of the virtues. For those who haveadvanced to the true contemplation of divine things, the Logos is bread, sustaining the intellective aspect oftheir souls and guiding it to a godlike perfection. That is why we find the patriarchs on their journeys providingthemselves with bread and their asses with fodder (cf Gen. 24:25: 42:25, 27). For the same reason the Levite inthe Book of Judges said to the old man who questioned him in the street of Gibeah: 'There is bread for us andfodder for our asses, and for your servants there is no lack of anything' (cf. Judges 19:19).

67. In Scripture the Logos of God is called and actually is dew (cf. Deut. 32:2), water, spring (cf. John 4:14) andriver (cf. John 7:38), according to the subjective capacity of the recipient. To some He is dew because Hequenches the burning energy of the passions which assails the body from without. To those seared in the depthsof their being by the poison of evil He is water, not only because water through antipathy destroys its oppositebut also because it bestows a vivifying

power conducive to well-being. To those in whom the fountain ofcontemplative experience is continually active He is a spring bestowing wisdom. To those from whom flows thetrue teaching about salvation. He is a river copiously watering men, domestic animals, wild beasts and plants.That is to say, those who have remained human are uplifted by the conceptual images they have been given andare so deified: those made like domestic animals by the passions are restored to the human state by being shownthe exact character of the virtuous way of life and so they recover their natural intelligence; those made likewild beasts by

evil habits and actions are tamed by kind and tender counsel and return to their natural gentleness; those hardenedlike plants against divine blessings are made pliable by the Logos passing deeply through them, and they regain thesensitivity that enables them to bear fruit and to sustain the Logos within them.

68. The Logos of God is the way (cf John 14:6) for those who run the course of virtue in their ascetic life nobly andvigorously, swerving neither to the right through self-esteem, nor to the left through proclivity to the passions,but directing their steps in accordance with God's will. Asa, king of Judah, did not persevere in this to the endand so it is said that in his old age he suffered from his feet (cf. 1 Kings 15:23), because he faltered in runningthe race of his life accordmg to God's will.

69. The Logos of God is called the door (cf. John 10:9) because He leads to spiritual knowledge those who, in theirunsullied pursuit of the ascetic life, have nobly traversed the whole way of the virtues, and because He reveals,as does light, the lustrous treasures of wisdom. For He Himself is the way, the door, the

key and the kingdom.He is the way because He guides; He is the key because He both opens and is opened to those found worthy toreceive divine blessings; He is the door because He gives admittance; He is the kingdom because He is inheritedand because He enters by participation into all things.

70. The Lord is called light, life, resurrection and truth (cf. John 8:12; 11:25; 14:6). He is light because He giveslucidity to the soul, dispels the darkness of ignorance, illumines the intellect so that it can grasp what isunutterable, and reveals mysteries perceptible only to the pure. He is life because He gives souls who love Himthe activity proper to the divine realm. He is resurrection because He raises the intellect from its lethalattachment to material things and purifies it from all decay and mortality. He is truth because He gives to thosefound worthy an unchanging state of sanctity.

71. The divine Logos of God the Father is mystically present in each of His commandments. God the Father is bynature present entirely and without division in His entire divine Logos. Thus, he who receives a divinecommandment and carries it out receives the Logos of God who is in it; and he who receives the Logos throughthe commandments also receives through Him the Father who is by nature present in Him, and the Spirit wholikewise is by nature in

Him. 'I tell you truly, he that receives whomever 1 send receives Me; and he that receives Me receives Him that sentMe" (John 13:20). In this way, he who receives a commandment and carries it out receives mystically the HolyTrinity.

72. It is not the man who worships God with words alone who glorifies God in himself but he who for God's sakebears hardship and suffermg in the quest for virtue. Such a man is glorified in return by God with the glory thatis in God,

receiving through participation the grace of dispassion as a reward for virtue. For everyone living thelife of ascetic practice who glorifies God in himself by suffering for the sake of virtue is himself glorified inGod through the dispassionate illumination of divine realities perceived during contemplation. For the Lord saidas He drew near to His passion, 'Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God isglorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself; and He will glorify Him at once' (John 13:31-32). Fromthis it is clear that divine gifts follow sufferings endured for the sake of virtue.

73. So long as we only see the Logos of God as embodied multifariously in symbols in the letter of Holy Scripture,we have not yet achieved spiritual insight into the incorporeal, simple, single and unique Father as He exists inthe incorporeal, simple, single and unique Son, according to the saying, 'He who has seen Me has seen theFather . . . and 1 am in the Father and the Father in Me'' (John 14:9-10). We need much knowledge so that,having first penetrated the veils of the sayings which cover the Logos, we may with a naked intellect see - in sofar as men can - the pure Logos, as He exists in Himself, clearly showing us the Father in Himself. Hence aperson who seeks God with true devotion should not be dominated by the literal text, lest he unwittinglyreceives not God but things appertaining to God; that is, lest he feel a dangerous affection for the words ofScripture instead of for the Logos. For the Logos eludes the intellect which supposes that it has grasped theincorporeal Logos by means of His outer garments, like the Egyptian woman who seized hold of Joseph'sgarments instead of Joseph himself (cf Gen. 39:7-13), or like the ancients who were content merely with thebeauty of visible things and mistakenly worshipped the creation instead of the Creator (cf. Rom. 1:25).

74. It is by means of the more lofty conceptual images that the inner principle of Holy Scripture can be strippedgradually of the

complex garment of words with which it is physically draped. Then to the visionary intellect - the intellect whichthrough the total abandonment of its natural activities is able to attain a glimpse of the simplicity that in somemeasure discloses this principle - it reveals itself as though in the sound of a delicate breeze. This was the case withElijah, who was granted such a vision in the cave of Horeb (cf. 1 Kgs. 19:12). Horeb signifies fallow land justbroken up, which is the firm possession of the virtues established through the new spirit of grace. The cave is thehidden sanctuary of wisdom within the intellect: he who enters it will mystically perceive the spiritual knowledgethat is beyond perception, in which God is said to dwell. Therefore everyone who like Elijah truly seeks God willnot only arrive at Horeb - that is, not only will he through ascetic practice attain the state of virtue - but will alsoenter the cave at Horeb - that is, as a contemplative he will enter into that hidden sanctuary of wisdom found only bythose who have attained the state of virtue.

75. When our intellect has shaken off its many opinions about created things, then the inner principle of truthappears clearly to it, providing it with a foundation of real knowledge and removing its former preconceptionsas though removing scales from the eyes, as happened in the case of St Paul (cf. Acts 9:18). For an under-standing of Scripture that does not go beyond the literal meaning, and a view of the sensible world that reliesexclusively on sense-perception, are indeed scales, blinding the soul's visionary faculty and preventing accessto the pure Logos of truth.

76. The Apostle Paul says that he had a partial knowledge of the Logos (cf. 1 Cor. 13:9). The Evangelist John statesthat he has seen His glory: 'For we beheld His glory,' he says, 'the glory as of the only-begotten Son of theFather, full of grace and truth' (John 1:14). Perhaps St Paul says that he has but a partial knowledge of thedivine Logos because the Logos is known from His energies only to a limited degree, while knowledge of Himas He is in essence and person is altogether inaccessible to all angels and men alike. St John, who was initiated

as perfectly as a man can be into the mystery of the incarnation of the Logos, said that he saw .the glory of theLogos as flesh, that is, he saw the purpose for which God, full of grace and truth, became man. For not as Godin His essence

and as coessential with God the Father was the only-begotten Son given to

us: only inasmuch as by virtue of God's providential dispensation He became man by nature and, for our sakes madecoessential with us. He was given to us who have need of such grace. And from His fullness we always receive thegrace which corresponds to each step we take along the spiritual path. Thus he who has kept the inner principle ofthings perfectly pure within himself will acquire the glory, full of grace and truth, of the Logos of God made fleshfor us, who through His coming glorified and sanctified Himself in His human nature for our sake. For 'when Heappears,' says Scripture, "we shall be like Him" (1 John 3:2).

77. So long as the soul advances "from strength to strength' (Ps. 84:7) and "from glory to glory' (2 Cor. 3:18), thatis, so long as it advances from one degree of virtue to a greater degree and from one level of spiritualknowledge to a higher level, it remains a 'sojourner', one who has no permanent home, as in the saying, "Mysoul has long been a sojourner" (Ps. 120:6. LXX). For great is the distance and many are the levels ofknowledge through which the soul must pass before it reaches "the place of the miraculous tabernacle, the houseof God itself, with the voice of exultation and thanksgiving, and the sound of feasting" (Ps. 42:4. LXX). Itadvances continually from one hymn of praise to another, from one level of divine contemplation to another,full of joy and thankfulness for what it has already seen. For all those who have received the Spirit of grace intotheir hearts celebrate in this festive manner, crying 'Abba, Father" (Gal. 4:6).

78. 'The place of the miraculous tabernacle' is a dispassionate and untroubled state of virtue in which the Logos ofGod adorns the soul like a tabernacle with

the varied beauties of the virtues. "The house of God" is spiritualknowledge compounded of many different forms of contemplation when God dwells in a soul, filling it from thebowl of wisdom. "Exultation" is the soul's leap of joy at the riches of the virtues. 'Thanksgiving" is gratitude forthe bountiful outpouring of wisdom. "The sound of feasting" is the unceasing mystical hymn of glory, which

exultation and thanksgiving combine to form.

79. The man who has struggled bravely with the passions of the body, has fought ably against unclean spirits, andhas expelled from his soul the conceptual images they provoke, should pray for a pure heart to be given him andfor a spirit of integrity to be renewed within him (cf Ps. 51:10). In other words, he should pray that by

grace he may be completely emptied of evil thoughts and filled with divine thoughts, so that he may become aspiritual world of God. splendid and vast, wrought from moral, natural and theological forms of contemplation.

!0. He who has made his heart pure will not only know the inner essences of what is sequent to God and dependenton Him but, after passing through all of them, he will in some measure see God Himself, which is the supremeconsummation of all blessings. When God comes to dwell in such a heart. He honors it by engraving His ownletters on it through the Holy Spirit, just as He did on the Mosaic tablets (cf. Exod. 31:18). This He doesaccording to the degree to which the heart, through practice of the virtues and contemplation, has devoted itselfto the admonition which bids us, in a mystical sense, 'Be fruitful and multiply" (Gen. 35:11).

) 1. A pure heart is perhaps one which has no natural propulsion towards anything in any manner whatsoever. Whenin its extreme simplicity such a heart has become like a writing-tablet beautifully smoothed and polished. Godcomes to dwell in it and writes there His own laws.

82. A pure heart is one which offers the mind to God free of all image and form, and ready to be imprinted onlywith His own archetypes, by which God Himself is made manifest.

83. According to the text, "But we have the intellect of Christ' (1 Cor. 2:16), the saints are said to receive Christ'sintellect. But this does not come to us through the loss of our own intellectual power: nor does it come to us as a

supplementary part added to our intellect: nor does it pass essentially and hypostatically into our intellect.Rather, it illumines the power of our intellect with its own quality and conforms the activity of our intellect toits own. In my opinion the person who has Christ's intellect is he whose intellection accords with that of Christand who apprehends Christ through all things.

84. According to the text, "We are the body of Christ and each of us is one of its members' (cf. 1 Cor. 12:27), weare said to be the body of Christ. We do not become this body through the loss of our own bodies: nor againbecause Christ's body passes into us hypostatically or is divided into members: but rather because we conformto the likeness of the Lord's flesh by shaking off the corruption of sin. For just as Christ in His manhood wassinless by nature both

in flesh and in soul, so we too who believe in Him, and have clothed ourselves in Him through the Spirit, can bewithout sin in Him if we so choose.

85. According to Scripture there are temporal ages in themselves, and temporal ages which encompass theconsummation of other ages. This is clear from the text: 'But now once at the consummation of the ages . . .'(Heb. 9:26). Again there are other ages or eons, free of a temporal nature, after this temporal age established atthe consummation of the ages. This is shown by the text:'. . . so that in the ages to come He might display theoverflowing richness . . .' (Eph. 2:7). But we also find in Scripture a large number of past, present and futureages: there are references to 'ages of ages' (Ps. 84:4. LXX), 'age of age' (Ps. 9:12. LXX), 'agelong times' (2Tim. 1:9) and 'generations joined together by the ages' (Gen. 9:12). But now lest we digress too far from oursubject by expounding what Scripture means by temporal ages or agelong times or generations, and byexplaining what are merely ages, what are ages of ages, and what is simply age, and age of age, let us leavethese matters to the researches of scholars and return to the theme of our chapters.

86. We know that according to Scripture there is something which transcends the age. Scripture has indicated that

this thing exists but it has not specified what it is, as the foUowing text shows: 'The Lord rules the age, andabove the age, and for ever" (Exod. 15:18. LXX). There is therefore something above the age, namely theinviolate kingdom of God. For it is not right to say that the kingdom of God had a beginnmg or that it waspreceded by ages or by time. We believe the kingdom to be the inheritance of those who are saved, their abodeand their place, as the true Logos has taught us. For it is the final goal of those who long for that which is thedesire of all desires. Once they have reached it they are granted rest from all movement whatsoever, as there isno longer any time or age through which they need to pass. For after passing through all things they will cometo rest in God, who exists before all ages and whom the nature of ages cannot attain.

87. Even though a man attains the highest degree of ascetic practice and contemplation possible in this earthly life,yet so long as he is still in this life he will possess spiritual knowledge, the power to prophesy and the pledge ofthe Holy Spirit only in part, not in their fullness. But when he comes, beyond the limit of the ages, to that

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perfect inheritance in which those found worthy behold the truth face to face and as it really is (cf 1 Cor. 13:12), hewill no longer have only a part of the fullness but will acquire by participation the whole fullness of grace. For, as StPaul says, all who are saved will attain perfect manhood, according to 'the measure of the stature of the fullness ofChrist' (Eph. 4:13), in whom all the treasures of wisdom and spiritual knowledge are hidden (cf Col. 2:3). Whenthese things are revealed, what is partial will cease to exist.

i. Some seek to discover what the state of perfection of the saints in the kingdom of God is like. Does it involveprogress and change or is it a fixed condition? In what way must bodies and souls be thought to exist? Speakingconjecturally, one may suggest a parallel between the life of the body and that of the soul. In the case ofphysical life the reason for taking food is twofold: first for growth and second for sustenance when we havealready grown up. Until we reach physical maturity we feed ourselves in order to grow; but when the bodyreaches its full stature it is fed no longer for growth but for sustenance. In the same way the reason fornourishing the soul is also twofold. While it is advancing along the spiritual path it is nourished by virtue and

contemplation, until it transcends all created things and attains 'the measure of the stature of the fullness ofChrist' (Eph. 4:13). Once it has entered this state it ceases from all increase and growth nourished by indirectmeans and is nourished directly, in a manner which passes understanding. Having now completed the stage ofgrowth, the soul receives the kind of incorruptible nourishment which sustains the godlike perfection granted toit, and receives a state of eternal well-being. Then the infinite splendors inherent in this nourishment arerevealed to the soul, and it becomes god by participation in divine grace, ceasing from all activity of intellectand sense, and at the same time suspending all the natural operations of the body. For the body is deified alongwith the soul through its own corresponding participation in the process of deification. Thus God alone is

mademanifest through the soul and the body, since their natural properties have been overcome by thesuperabundance of His glory.

89. Some scholars try to discover how the eternal dwelling-places and things promised differ from each other. Isthere a difference in their actual locality? Or does the difference arise from our conception of the spiritualquality and quantity peculiar to each dwelling-

place? Some think the first and some the second. He who knows the meaning of "The kingdom of God is withinyou' (Luke 17:21), and 'In my Father's house are many dwelling-places' (John 14:2), will prefer the secondexplanation.

90. Some try to discover how the kingdom of heaven differs from the kingdom of God. Is there a difference in theiractual nature, or is the difference a conceptual one? The answer is that they do not differ in their actual natures,but merely in our conception of them. The kingdom of heaven consists in possessing an inviolate and pre-etemal knowledge of created things through perceiving their inner essences as they exist in God. The kingdomof God is the imparting through grace of those blessings which pertain naturally to God. The first concerns theconsummation of created things, the second our conception of their state after they reach their consummation.

91. The text, 'The kingdom of heaven has drawn near' (Matt. 3:2: 4:17), does not in my judgment imply anytemporal limitation. For the kingdom 'does not come in a way that can be observed: one cannot say, "Look, it ishere" or "Look, it is there" ' (Luke 17:20-21). The phrase has reference to the relationship which the

saints havewith the kingdom, each according to his or her inner state. For 'the kingdom of God', says Scripture, 'is withinyou" (Luke 17:21).

92. The kingdom of God the Father is present in all believers in potentiality; it is present in actuality in those who,after totally expelling all natural life of soul and body from their inner state, have attained the life of the Spiritalone and are able to say, "1 no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20).

93. Some say that the kingdom of heaven is the way of life which the saints lead in heaven: others that it is a statesimilar to that of the angels, attained by those who are saved; others that it is the very form of the divine beautyof those who 'wear the image of Him who is from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:49). In my judgment each of these threeviews is correct. For the grace of the kingdom is given to all according to the quality and quantity of therighteousness that is in. them.

94. So long as we are manfully engaged in the holy warfare of ascetic or practical philosophy we retain with us theLogos, who in the form of the commandments came from the Father into this world. But when we are releasedfrom our ascetic struggle with the passions and are declared victor over both them and the demons, we

pass, by means of contemplation, to gnostic philosophy; and in this way we allow the Logos mystically to leave theworld again and make His way to the Father. Hence it is that the Lord says to His disciples: "You have loved Me andhave believed that 1 come from God. 1 came from the Father and have come into the world; again 1 leave the worldand make My way to the Father" (John

16:27-28). By the world He meant perhaps the hard task of practicing thevirtues; by the Father, that intellectual state which transcends the world and is free from all material propensity.When we are in this state the Logos of God enters into us, putting an end to our battle with the passions and the

demons.

95. He who through practice of the virtues has succeeded in mortifying whatever is earthly in him (cf Col. 3:5), andwho by fulfilling the commandments has triumphed over the world of the passions within him, will experienceno more affliction: for he will have already left the world and come to be in Christ, the conqueror of the worldof the passions and the source of all peace. He who has not severed his attachment to material things willalways experience affliction, smce his state of mind depends on things that are naturally changeable, and so italters when they do. But he who has come to be in Christ will be totally impervious to such material change.That is why the Lord says, 'I have said these things to you, so that in Me you may have peace. In the world youwill experience affliction; but have courage, for I have overcome the world' (John 16:33). In other words, "InMe, the Logos of virtue, you have peace, for you have been released from the swirl and turmoil of materialpassions and objects; in the world - that is, in a state of attachment to material things - you are afflicted becauseof the successive changes of these things.' For both he who practices the virtues and he who loves the worldexperience affliction, the first because of the toil which such practice entails and the second because of thefutility of material things. But the affliction of the first is salutary, that of the second corrupting and destructive.The Lord gives release to both: in the case of the first He allays the toil of ascetic practice with thecontemplation attained through dispassion, and in the case of the second He rescinds attachment to corruptedthings by means of repentance.

96. The charge made against the Savior in the inscription on the Cross clearly showed that He who was crucifiedwas Lord and king

of practical, natural and theological philosophy. For Scripture says that the inscription was written in Latin, Greekand Hebrew (cf. John 19:20). I take Latin to signify the practical branch of philosophy, since according to Daniel(cf. Dan. 2:40) the Roman empire was appointed to be the most resolute and manful of all the kingdoms on earth; forthe distinguishing feature of the practice of the virtues, or practical philosophy, is resolution and manfulness, I take

Greek to signify natural contemplation, since the Greek nation more than any other people has pursued naturalphilosophy. I take Hebrew to signify initiation into the mysteries of theology, since this nation was from thebeginning clearly consecrated to God through the patriarchs.

97. We must not only put bodily passions to death but also destroy the soul's impassioned thoughts. Hence thepsalmist says, "Early in the morning I destroyed all the wicked of the earth, that I might cut off all evil-doersfrom the city of the Lord" (Ps. 101:8) -that is, the passions of the body and the soul's godless thoughts.

98. If we keep the path of virtue undefiled through devout and true knowledge, and do not deviate to either side, wewill experience the advent of God revealed to us because of our dispassion. For 'I will sing a psalm and in apure path I will understand when Thou wilt come to me' (cf. Ps. 101:1-2). The psalm stands for virtuousconduct; understanding indicates the spiritual knowledge, gained through virtue, by means of which weperceive God's advent, when we wait for the Lord vigilant in the virtues.

99. He who is a beginner on the spiritual way must not be brought to practice the commandments by kindnessalone, but must more often be induced to continue the struggle by being rigorously reminded of God'sjudgment, in this way he will not only be moved by love to desire what is divine, but will be moved by fear toavoid what is evil. For 'I will sing to Thee, 0 Lord, of mercy and judgment' (Ps. 101:1. LXX). He will sing toGod charmed by love, and steeled by fear he will have strength for the song.

100.He who through virtue and spiritual knowledge has brought his body into harmony with his soul has become aharp, a flute and a temple of God. He has become a harp by preserving the harmony of the virtues: a flute byreceiving the inspiration of the Spirit through divine contemplation: and a temple by becoming a dwelling placeof the Logos through the purity of his intellect.

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1. The Good that is beyond being and beyond the unoriginate is one, the holy unity of three persons. Father, Sonand Holy Spirit. It is an infinite union of three infinites. Its principle of being, together with the mode, the natureand the quality of its being, is altogether inaccessible to creatures. For it eludes every intellection of intellectivebeings, in no way issuing from its natural hidden inwardness, and infinitely transcendmg the summit of allspiritual knowledge.

2. The substantive and essential Good is that which has no origin, no consummation, no cause of being and nomotion whatsoever, so far as its being is concerned, towards any final cause. The goodness to which such termsapply is not substantive since it has an origin, a consummation, a cause of being, and motion, so far as its beingis concerned, towards some final cause. Even if what is not being in the substantive sense is said to be, it existsand is said to be by participation, through the will of substantive being.

3. Not only is the divine Logos prior to the genesis of created beings, but there neither was nor is nor will be aprinciple superior to the Logos. The Logos is not without intellect or bereft of life; He possesses intellect andlife because the Father is the essentially subsistent intellect that begets Him, and the Holy Spirit is Hisessentially subsistent and coexistent life.

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4. There is one God, because the Father is the begetter of the unique Son and the fount of the Holy Spirit: onewithout confusion and three without division. The Father is unoriginate Intellect, the unique essential Begetterof the unique Logos, also unoriginate, and the .fount of the unique everlasting life, the Holy Spirit.

5. There is one God because there is one Divinity, a Unity un-riginate, simple, beyond being, without parts andundivided. The same Unity is a Trinity, also unoriginate, simple and so on.

6. Everything that derives its existence from participation in some other reality presupposes the ontologicalpriority of that other reality. Thus it is clear that the divine Cause of created beings -which derive their existencefrom participation in that Cause - is incomparably superior to all such beings in every way, since by nature itsexistence is prior to theirs and they presuppose its onto-logical priority. It does not exist as a being withaccidents, because if that were the case the divine would be composite, its own existence receiving completionfrom the existence of created beings. On the contrary, it exists as the beyond-beingness of being. For if artists intheir art conceive the shapes of those things which they produce, and if universal nature conceives the forms ofthe things within it, how much more does God Himself bring into existence out of nothing the very being of allcreated things, since He is beyond being and even infinitely transcends the attribution of beyond-beingness. Forit is He who has yoked the sciences to the arts so that shapes might be devised; it is He who has given to naturethe energy which produces its forms, and who has established the very is-ness of beings by virtue of which theyexist.

7. God, in whose essence created beings do not participate, but who wills that those capable of so doing shall

participate in Him according to some other mode, never issues from the hiddenness of His essence; for even thatmode according to which He wills to be participated in remains perpetually concealed from all men. Thus, justas God of His own will is participated in - the manner of this being known to Him. alone - in the surpassingpower of His good-ness. He freely brings into existence participating beings, according to the principle whichHe alone understands. Therefore what has come mto being by the will of Him who made it can never be co-etemal with Him who willed it to exist.

8. The divine Logos, who once for all was bom in the flesh.

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always in His compassion desires to be bom in spirit in those who desire Him. He becomes an infant and mouldsHimself in them through the virtues. He reveals as much of Himself as He knows the recipient can accept; He doesnot diminish the manifestation of His own greatness out of lack of generosity but estimates the receptive capacity ofthose who desire to see Him. In this way the divine Logos is eternally made manifest m different modes ofparticipation, and yet remains etemally invisible to all in virtue of the surpassing nature of His hidden activity. Thatis why the apostle, when wisely considering the power of this hidden activity, says, 'Jesus Christ the sameyesterday, and today, and throughout the ages' (Heb. 13:8); for he sees the hidden activity as something which isalways new and never becomes outmoded through being embraced by the intellect.

9. Christ our God is bom and becomes man by adding to Himself flesh endowed with an intellective soul. He whofrom non-being brings created things into being is Himself bom supranaturally of a Virgin who does notthereby lose her virginity. For just as He Himself became man without changing His nature or altering Hispower, so He makes her who bore Him a Mother while keeping her a Virgin. In this way He reveals one miraclethrough another miracle, at the same time concealing the one with the other. This is because in Himself,according to His essence. God always remains a mystery. He expresses His natural hiddenness in such a waythat He makes it the more hidden through the revelation. Similarly, in the case of the Virgin who bore Him, Hemade her a Mother in such a way that by conceiving Him the bonds of her virginity became even more in-dissoluble.

10. Natures are changed into something new and God becomes man. Not only is divine nature, stable and unmoved.

moved towards what is unstable and subject to movement, in order to stop it

from being swept away; not onlydoes human nature produce without seed, in a way that is supranatural, the flesh which is brought to perfectionby the Logos, in order to prevent it too from being swept away; but a star from the east shone in the day andguided the Magi (cf. Matt. 2:2-10) to the place where the Logos became incarnate, in order to show in amystical way that the inner teaching of the Law and the prophets is superior to the senses and guides theGentiles towards the supreme light of spiritual knowledge. For

clearly the inner teaching of the Law and the prophets, when contemplated devoutly like a star, leads to knowledgeof the incarnate Logos those who freely respond to the call of grace.

11. As man I deliberately transgressed the divine commandment, when the devil, enticing me with the hope ofdivinity (cf Gen. 3:5), dragged me down from my natural stability into the realm of sensual pleasure; and hewas proud to have thus brought death mto existence, for he delights in the corruption of human nature. Becauseof this, God became perfect man, taking on everything that belongs to human nature except sin (cf. Heb. 4:15);and indeed sin is not part of human nature. In this way, by enticmg the insatiable serpent with the bait of theflesh. He provoked him to open his mouth and swallow it. This flesh proved poison to him, destroying himutterly by the power of the Divinity within it; but to human nature it proved a remedy restoring it to its originalgrace by that same power of the Divinity within it. For just as the devil poured out his venom of sin on the treeof knowledge and corrupted human nature once it had tasted it, so when he wished to devour the flesh of theMaster he was himself destroyed by the power of the Divinity within it.

12. The great mystery of the incarnation remains a mystery eternally. Not only is what is not yet seen of it greaterthan what has been revealed - for it is revealed merely to the extent that those saved by it can grasp it - but alsoeven what is revealed still remains entirely hidden and is by no means known as it really is. What I have saidshould not appear paradoxical. For God is beyond being and

transcends all beyond-beingness; and so, when Hewished to come down to the level of being. He became being in a manner which transcends bemg. Thus, too,although transcending man, yet out of love for man He truly became man by taking on the substance of men;.but the manner in which He became man always remains un-revealed, for He was made man in a way whichtranscends man.

13. Let us contemplate with faith the mystery of the divine incarnation and in all simplicity let us simply praise Himwho in His great generosity became man for us. For who, relying on the power of rational demonstration, canexplain how the conception of the divine Logos took place? How was flesh generated without seed? How wasthere an engendering without loss of maidenhood? How did a mother after giving birth remain a virgin? Howdid He who

was supremely perfect develop as He grew up (cf. Luke 2:52)? How was He who was pure baptized? How did Hewho was hungry give sustenance (cf Matt. 4: 2; 14:14-21)? How did He who was weary impart strength (cf. John4:6)? How did He who suffered dispense healing? How did He who was dying bestow life? And, to put the mostimportant last, how did God become man? And - what is even more mysterious - how did the Logos, whilesubsisting wholly, essentially and hypostatically in the Father, also exist essentially and hypostatically in the flesh?How did He who is wholly God by nature become wholly man by nature, not renouncing either nature in any way atall, neither the divine, through which He is God, nor ours, through which He became man? Faith alone can embracethese mysteries, for it is faith that makes real for us things beyond intellect and reason (cf. Heb. 11:1).

14. Because Adam disobeyed, human nature has come to be generated through sensual pleasure; banishing suchpleasure from human nature, the Lord had nothing to do with engendering by means of seed. Because thewoman transgressed the commandment, the generation of human nature begins in pain (cf. Gen. 3:16);expelling this from human nature through His birth, the Lord did not allow her who bore Him to lose hervirginity. He did this in order to expel

from human nature both pleasure deliberately sought and the resultingunsought pain, becoming the destroyer of those things which He did not create. Through this He also mysticallytaught us to embark of our own accord on another way of life, one perhaps begun in pain and labor butnevertheless ending in divine pleasure and everlasting gladness. That is why He who made man became a manand was bom as a man, so that He might save man and, by healing our passions through His passion, mightHimself supra-naturally destroy the passions that were destroying us, in His compassion renewing us in thespirit through His privations in the flesh.

15. He who longing for the divine has overcome the soul's predilection for the body is free from physicallimitations even though he is in a body. For God, who attracts the desire of the person who longs for Him, isincomparably higher than all things, and does not allow anyone who longs for Him to direct his desire towardsanything sequent to Him. Let us therefore long for God with all the strength of our nature and let us keep ourresolution unfettered by any bodily needs. Let us rise above all sensible and intelligible

realities, and let us not allow any physical limitation to compromise our resolve to be with God, who is by naturebeyond all limitation.

16. The suffering of the saints lies in the struggle between malice and virtue, the former fighting to win control, thelatter enduring all things to avoid defeat. The first struggles to nurture sin by chastising the righteous; thesecond to hold good men firm although they experience more than their share of misfortunes.

17. The task of virtue is to contend against hardship and suffering. The prize for victory, given to those who standtheir ground, is the soul's dispassion. In this state the soul is united with God through love, and in inwardresolution it is separated from the body and the world. Those who stand their ground find that the soul'sstrength lies in the body's affliction.

18. Beguiled from our original state by the deceitfulness of sensual pleasure, we chose death rather than true life.Let us then gladly endure the bodily hardship which puts such pleasure to death. In this way the death ofpleasure will destroy the death which came about through pleasure, and we shall receive back, purchased withbut slight bodily hardship, the life which we sold for the sake of sensual pleasure.

19. If when the flesh has an easy life the force of sin tends to grow stronger. It is clear that when the flesh suffersaffliction the force of virtue will also increase. So let us bravely endure the affliction of the flesh, whichcleanses the soul's stains and brings us future glory. For 'the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to becompared with the glory which shall be revealed in us' (Rom. 8:18).

20. When physicians are treating the body they do not administer the same remedy in all cases. Neither does God,when treating the illnesses of the soul, regard a single kind of therapy as suitable for all conditions but He allotsto each soul what is suitable for it and effects its cure. So let us give thanks while we are being created, howevergreat our suffering, for the result is blessed.

21. Nothing disciplines the disposition of the soul so well as the protests of the afflicted flesh. If the soul gives wayto them, it will be evident that it loves the flesh more than God. But if it remains unshaken by these

disturbances, it will be shown to honor virtue more than the flesh. Through virtue God will come to dwell in it ■God who for the soul's sake patiently bears our human suffering -

and will say to it as He once did to the disciples, 'Have courage, for I have overcome the world' (John 16 : 33).

22. If all the saints had their share of discipline, we too should thank God that we are disciplined with them, so thatwe may be found worthy to partake of their

glory, 'for whom the Lord loves He disciplines; He chastens everyson He accepts' (Prov. 3:12. LXX).

23. When Adam accepted the sensual pleasure offered to him by Eve, who had come from his side, he expelledhumanity from paradise (cf Gen. 3:24). But when the Lord in His agony was pierced in his side by the lance.He brought the robber into paradise (cf. Luke 23:43). Let us. then, love the suffering of the flesh and hate itspleasure; for the first brings us in and restores God's blessings to us, while the second drives us out andseparates us from those blessings.

24. If God suffers in the flesh when He is made man, should we not rejoice when we suffer, for we have God toshare our sufferings? This shared suffering confers the kingdom on us. For he spoke truly who said, "If wesuffer with Him, then we shall also be glorified with Him' (Rom. 8:17).

25. If we have to suffer because our ancestor involved our nature with sensual pleasure, let us endure our temporarysufferings bravely; for they blunt the sharp point of such pleasure for us, and free us from the eternal tormentwhich it brings upon us.

26. Love is the consummation of all blessings, since all who walk in it love leads and guides towards God, thesupreme blessing and cause of every blessing, and unites them with Him; for love is faithful and never fails (cf.1 Cor. 13:8). Faith is the foundation of what comes after it, namely hope and love, since it provides a firm basisfor truth. Hope is the strength of the two pre-eminent gifts of love and faith, since hope gives us glimpses bothof that in which we believe and of that for which we long, and teaches us to make our way towards our goal.Love is the completion of the other two, embracing entirely the entire desire of all desires, and satisfying the

yearning of our faith and hope for it: for that which we beheve to be and which we hope will come to pass, loveenables us to enjoy as a present reality.

27. The most perfect work of love, and the fulfillment of its activity, is to effect an exchange between those it joinstogether, which in some measure unites their distinctive characteristics and

adapts their respective conditions to each other. Love makes man god, and reveals and manifests God as man,through the single and identical purpose and activity of the will of both.

28. If we are made, as we are, in the image of God (cf Gen. 1:27), let us become the image both of ourselves and ofGod; or rather let us all become the image of the one whole God, bearing nothing earthly in ourselves, so thatwe may consort with God and become gods, receiving from God our existence as gods. For in this way thedivine gifts and the presence of divine peace are honored.

29. Love is a great blessing and of all blessings the first and supreme, since it joins God and men together aroundhim who has love, and it makes the Creator of men manifest Himself as man through the exact likeness of thedeified man to God, in so far as this is possible for man. This is what I take to be the actualization of thecommandment, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all yourmight, and your neighbor as yourself (cf. Lev. 19:18; Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37-39).

30. The devil has deceived us by guile in a malicious and cunning way, provoking us through self-love to sensualpleasure (cf. Gen. 3:1-5). He has separated us in our wills from God and from each other; he has pervertedstraightforward truth and in this manner has divided humanity, cutting it up into many opinions and fantasies.

31. The greatest authors and instigators of evil are ignorance, self-love and tyranny. Each depends on the other twoand is supported by them: from ignorance of God comes self-love, and from self-love comes tyranny over one'sown kind. The devil establishes these in us when we misuse our own powers, namely our intelligence, ourdesire and our incensive power.

32. By intelligence we should be stimulated to overcome our ignorance and to seek the one and only God by means

of spiritual knowledge: through desire - through a passion of self-love which has been purified - we should bedrawn in longing to the one God: and with an incensive power divorced from all tyrannical propensity weshould struggle to

attain God alone. From these three powers of the soul we should actualize that divine andblessed love on account of which they exist, that love which joins the devout man to God and reveals him to bea god.

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33. Since self-love is, as I have said, the origin and mother of evil, when this is eradicated all the things whichderive from it are eradicated as well. For when self-love is absent, not the slightest trace or form of evil canexist in any way at all.

34. We should care for ourselves and each other in the way that Christ Himself, who patiently suffered for us, hasalready shown us in His own person.

35. For the sake of love all the saints resisted sin, not showing any regard for this present life. And they enduredmany forms of death, in order to be separated from the world and united with themselves and with God, joiningtogether in themselves the broken fragments of human nature. For this is the true and undefiled theosophy of thefaithful. Its consummation is goodness and trath - if indeed goodness as compassion and truth as devotion toGod in faith are the marks of love. It unites men to God and to one another, and on this account contains theunchanging permanence of all blessings.

36. The actualization and proof of perfect love for God is a genuine and -willing attitude of goodwill towards one'sneighbor. 'For he who does not love his brother whom he has seen', says St John, 'cannot love God whom hehas not seen" (1 John 4:20).

37. The way of truth is love. The Logos of God called Himself the way (cf. John 14:6, 1 John 4:8): and those whotravel on this way He presents, purified from every stain, to God the Father.

38. This is the door through which a man enters into the Holy of Holies and is brought to the vision of theunapproachable beauty of the Holy and Royal Trinity.

39. It is a fearful and heinous thing for us, because of our love for things corruptible, deliberately to kill the life thatwas given to us by God as the gift of the Holy Spirit. Those who have trained themselves to prefer truth to self-love will certainly know this fear.

40. Let us use peace in the right way: repudiating our evil alliance with the world and its ruler, let us at last breakoff the war which we wage against God through the passions. Concluding an unbreakable covenant of peacewith Him by destroying the body of sin within us (cf. Rom. 6:6), let us put an end to our hostility towards Him.

41. Rebelling as we do against God through the passions and agreeing to pay tribute in the form of evil to thatcunning tyrant

and murderer of souls, the devil, we cannot be reconciled with God until we have first begun to fight against thedevil with all our strength. For even though we assume the name of faithful Christians, until we have made ourselvesthe devil's enemies and fight against him, we continue by deliberate choice to serve the shameful passions. Andnothing of profit will come to us from our peace in the world, for our soul is in an evil state, rebelling against itsown Maker and unwilling to be subject to His kingdom. It is still sold into bondage to hordes of savage masters, whourge it towards evil and treacherously contrive to make it choose the way which leads to destruction instead of thatwhich brings salvation.

42. God made us so that we might become 'partakers of the divine nature' (2 Pet. 1:4) and sharers in His eternity,and so that we might come to be like Him (cf 1 John 3:2) through deification by grace. It is through deificationthat all things are reconstituted and achieve their permanence; and it is for its sake that what is not is broughtinto being and given existence.

43. If we desire to belong to God in both name and reality, let us struggle not to betray the Logos to the passions, asJudas did (cf Matt. 26:14-16), or to deny Him

as Peter did (cf Matt. 26:69-75). To deny the Logos is to failthrough fear to do what is good: to betray Him is deliberately to choose and commit sin.

44. The outcome of every affliction endured for the sake of virtue is joy, of every labor rest, and of every shamefultreatment glory; in short, the outcome of all sufferings for the sake of virtue is to be with God, to remain withHim for ever and to enjoy eternal rest.

45. Because He wishes to unite us in nature and will with one another, and in His goodness urges all humanitytowards this goal, God in His love entrusted His saving commandments to us, ordaining simply that we shouldshow mercy and receive mercy (cf. Matt. 5:7).

46. The self-love and cleverness of men, alienating them from each other and perverting the law, have cut oursingle human nature into many fragments. They have so extended the insensibility which they introduced intoour nature and which now dominates it, that our nature, divided in will and purpose, fights against itself. Thusanyone who has succeeded by sound judgment and nobility of intelligence in resolving this anomalous state ofour nature has shown

mercy to himself prior to showing it to others; for he has molded his will and purpose in conformity to nature, andthrough them he has advanced towards God by means of nature; he has revealed in himself what it means to be 'inthe image' and shown how excellently in the beginning God created our nature in His likeness and as a pure copy ofHis own goodness, and how He made our nature one with itself in every way - peaceable, free from strife andfaction, bound to God and to itself by love, making us cleave to God with desire and to each other with mutualaffection.

47. In His love for man God became man so that He might unite human nature to Himself and stop it from actingevilly towards itself, or rather from being at strife and divided against itself, and from having no rest because ofthe instability of its

will and purpose.

48. Nothing sequent to God is more precious for beings endowed with intellect, or rather is more dear to God, thanperfect love; for love unites those who have been divided and is able to create a single identity of will andpurpose, free from faction, among many or among all; for the property of love is to produce a single will and

purpose in those who seek what pertains to it.

49. If by nature the good unifies and holds together what has been separated, evil clearly divides and corrupts whathas been unified. For evil is by nature dispersive, unstable, multiform and divisive.

50. The true love of God, grounded in real knowledge, together with the total repudiation of the soul's affection forthe body and this world, is the short road to salvation and brings deliverance from all sins. In this way, castingoff desire for pleasure and fear of pain, we are freed from evil self-love and are raised to a spiritual knowledgeof the Creator. In the place of the evil self-love, we receive an uncorrupt and spiritual self-love, separated fromaffection for the body: and we do not cease to worship God through this uncorrupt self-love, always seekingfrom Him sustenance for our souls. For true worship, genuinely pleasing to God, is the strict cultivation of thesoul through the virtues.

51. If you do not long for bodily pleasure and have not the slightest fear of pain, you have attained dispassion. Forby overcoming such longing and fear, together with the self-love which has engendered them, you have killed ata single blow all the passions which have come into being through them and from them, as well as the principalsource of all evil, ignorance. You have become full of

that goodness which Is stable and permanent and always remains the same by nature; and in that goodness you standabsolutely immovable, "with unveiled face

reflecting the glory of the Lord' (2 Cor. 3:18) and contemplating throughthe radiant brightness; within you the divine and unapproachable glory.

52. Let us reject the pleasure and pain of this present life with what strength we have, and so free ourselves entirelyfrom all thoughts of the passions and all machinations of the demons. For we love the passions because ofpleasure and avoid virtue because of pain.

53. Since it is the nature of every evil to destroy itself along with the habits which brought it into being, man finds

by experience that every pleasure is inevitably succeeded by pain, and so directs his whole effort towardspleasure and does all he can to avoid pain. He struggles with all his might to attain pleasure and he fightsagainst pain with immense zeal. By doing this he hopes to keep the two apart from each other - which isimpossible - and to indulge his self-love in ways which bring only pleasure and are entirely free from pain.Dominated by the passion of self-love he is, it appears, ignorant that pleasure can never exist without pain. Forpain is intertwined with pleasure, even though this seems to escape the notice of those who suffer it. It escapestheir notice because desire for pleasure is the dominating force in self-love, and what dominates is naturallyalways more conspicuous and obscures one's sense of what is present with it. Thus because in our self-love wepursue pleasure, and because - also out of self-love - we try to escape pain, we generate untold corruptmgpassions in ourselves.

54. A man no longer experiences pleasure and pain when, freeing his intellect from its relationship with the body,he binds or rather unites it to God, tile real goal of love, longing and desire.

55. Just as one cannot worship God in a pure way without utterly purifying the soul, so one cannot worship creationwithout pampering the body. By fulfilling, out of concern fop the body, that worship which causes corruption,and by thus acquiring self-love, man became subject to the unceasing action of pleasure and pain; eating alwaysfrom the tree of disobedience - the tree of the knowledge of good and evil - in this way he acquiredexpenentially through sense-perception a knowledge in which good and evil were intermingled. And it wouldnot be untrue to say that the tree of the knowledge of

good and evil is the visible created world. For this world is by nature subject to that alternation which producespleasure and pain.

56. Where intelligence does not rule, the senses naturally assume the dominant role. The power of sin is somehowmingled with the senses and induces the soul by means of sensual pleasure to have pity for the flesh, to which itis joined. When the soul pursues the impassioned and pleasurable cultivation of the flesh as its natural task, it isdiverted from a life lived in accordance with nature and is impelled to become the author of evil, which has no

substantial existence.

57. Evil is the noetic soul's forgetfulness of what is good according to nature; and this forgetfulness results from animpassioned relationship with the flesh and the world. When the intelligence is in control it dispels thisforgetfulness through spiritual knowledge, since intelligence, having investigated the nature of the world andthe flesh, draws the soul to the realm of spiritual realities which is its true home. Into this realm the law of sincannot penetrate: for the link between the soul and the senses has now been broken, and the senses, limited tothe world of sensible objects, can no longer function as a bridge conveying the law of sin into the intellect.When the intellect transcends its relationship with sensible objects and the world to which they pertain, itbecomes utterly free from the sway of the senses.

58. When the intelligence dominates the passions it makes the senses instruments of virtue. Conversely, when thepassions dominate the intelligence they conform the senses to sin. One must watchfully study and reflect howthe soul can best reverse the situation and use those things through which it had formerly sinned to generate andsustain the virtues.

59. The holy Gospel teaches men to reject life according to the flesh and to embrace life according to the Spirit. Iam speaking of those who are always dying to what is human -1 mean human life in the flesh according to thispresent age - and living for God in the Spirit alone, after the example of St Paul and his

followers. They do notin any way live then' own life but have Christ living in them in the soul alone (cf Gal. 2:20). Those, then, whoin this age are truly dead to the flesh can be distinguished in this way: even though they suffer much affliction,torment, distress and persecution, and

experience innumerable forms of trial and temptation, nevertheless they bear everything with joy.

60. Every passion always consists of a combination of some perceived object, a sense faculty and a natural power -the mcensive power, desire or the intelligence, as the case may be - whose natural function has been distorted.Thus, if the intellect investigates the final result of these three inter-related factors - the sensible object, the

sense faculty and the natural power involved with the sense faculty - it can distinguish each from the other two,and refer each back to its specific natural function. It can, that is to say, view the sensible object in itself, apartfrom its relationship to the sense faculty, and the sense faculty in itself, apart from its connection with thesensible object, and the natural power - desire, for example - apart from its impassioned alliance with the sensefaculty and the sensible object. In this way, the intellect reduces to its constituent parts whatever passion itinvestigates, in much the same way as the golden calf of Israel in Old Testament days was ground into powderand mixed with water (cf. Exod. 32:20): it dissolves it with the water of spiritual knowledge, utterly destroyingeven the passion-free image of the passions, by restoring each of its elements to its natural state.

61. A life stained with many faults arising from the passions of the flesh is a soiled garment. For from his mode oflife, as if from some garment, each man declares himself to be either righteous or wicked. The righteous manhas a holy life as a clean garment; the wicked man has a life soiled with evil actions. Thus a 'garment stained bythe flesh' (Jude, verse 23) is the inner state and disposition of

the soul when its conscience is deformed by therecollection of evil impulses and actions arising from the flesh. When this state or disposition constantlyenvelops the soul like a garment, it is filled with the stink of the passions. But when the virtues, through thepower of the Spirit, are interwoven in accordance with the intelligence, they form a garment of incorruption forthe soul: dressed in this the soul becomes beautiful and resplendent. Conversely, when the passions areinterwoven under the influence of the flesh, they form a filthy, soiled garment, which reveals the character ofthe soul, imposing on it a form and image contrary to the divine.

62. A sure warrant for looking forward with hope to the deification of human nature is provided by the incarnationof God, which

makes man god to the same degree as God Himself became man. For it is clear that He who became man without sin(cf. Heb. 4:15) will divinize human nature without changing it into the divine nature, and will raise it up for His ownsake to the same degree as He lowered Himself for man's sake. This is what St Paul teaches mystically when hesays, '. . . that in the ages to come He might display the overflowing richness of His grace' (Eph. 2:7).

63. When the intelhgence is in control of the incensive power and desire, it produces the virtues. When the intellectdevotes its attention to the inner essences of created things, it reaps genuine spiritual knowledge. Thus theintelligence, after rejecting everything alien, discovers what is desirable according to our true nature: and theintellect, after passing beyond the things that are known, apprehends the Cause of created things that transcendsbeing and knowledge. Then the passion of deification is actualized by grace: the intelligence's power of naturaldiscrimination is suspended, for there is no longer anything to discriminate about: the intellect's naturalmtellection is brought to a halt, for there is no longer anything to be known: and the person found worthy toparticipate in the divine is made god and brought into a state of rest.

64. Suffering cleanses the soul infected with the filth of sensual pleasure and detaches it completely from materialthings by showing it the penalty incurred as a result of its affection for them. This is why God in His justiceallows the devil to afflict men with torments.

65. Pleasure and distress, desire and fear, and what follows from them, were not originally created as elements ofhuman nature, for in that case they would form part of the definition of that nature. I follow in this matter StGregory of Nyssa, who states that these things were introduced as a result of our fall from perfection, beinginfiltrated into that part of our nature least endowed with intelligence. Through them the blessed and divineimage in man was at the time of our transgression immediately replaced by a clear and obvious likeness toanimals. Once the true dignity of the intelligence had been obscured, it was inevitable and just that humannature should be chastised by those witless elements which it had introduced into itself. In this way God m Hisprovidence wisely made man conscious of the nobility of his intellect.

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66. Even the passions become good if we wisely and diligently detach them from what is bodily and direct themtowards the acquisition of what is heavenly. This happens, for example, when we turn desire into a noeticyearning for heavenly blessings: or when we turn pleasure into the gentle delight which the volitive energy ofthe intellect finds in divine gifts: or when we turn fear into protective concern to escape punishmentsthreatening us because of our sins: or when we turn distress into corrective remorse for present sin. In short, thepassions become good if - like wise physicians who use the body of the viper as a remedy against present orexpected harm resulting from its bite - we use them to destroy present or expected evil, and in order to acquire

and safeguard virtue and spiritual knowledge.

67. The law of the Old Testament through practical philosophy cleanses human nature of all defilement. The law ofthe New Testament, through initiation into

the mysteries of contemplation, raises the intellect by means ofspiritual knowledge from the sight of material things to the vision of spiritual realities.

68. Those who are beginners and stand at the gate of the divine court of the virtues (cf. Exod. 27:9) are called 'God-fearing' by Scripture (cf. Acts 10:2; 13:16, 26). Those who with some measure of stability have acquired theprinciples and qualities of the virtues, it describes as 'advancing'. Those who in their pursuit of holiness have bymeans of spiritual knowledge already attained the summit of that truth which reveals the virtues, it entitles'perfect''. Thus he who has abandoned his former passion-dominated way of life, and out of fear has submittedhis entire will to the divine commandments, will lack none of the blessings which are appropriate to beginners,even though he has not yet acquired stability in the practice of the virtues or come to share in the wisdomspoken among those who are perfect- (cf. 1 Cor. 2:6). And he who is advancing will not lack any of theblessings which belong to his degree, even though he has not yet acquired the transcendent knowledge of divinerealities possessed by the perfect. For the perfect have already been initiated mystically into contemplativetheology: having purified their intellects of every material fantasy and bearing always the stamp of the image ofdivine beauty in all its fullness, they manifest the divine love present in their hearts.

69. Fear is twofold; one kind is pure, the other impure. That

which is pre-eminently fear of punishment on account of offences committed is impure, for it is sin which gives riseto it. It will not last for ever, for when the sin is obliterated through repentance it too will disappear. Pure fear, on theother hand, is always present even apart from remorse for offences committed. Such fear will never cease to exist,because it is somehow rooted essentially by God in creation and makes clear to everyone His awe-inspiring nature,which transcends all kingship and power.

70. He who does not fear God as judge but holds Him in awe because of the

surpassing excellence of His infinite

power will not justly lack anything: for having reached perfection in love, he loves God with awe and fittingreverence. He has acquired the fear that endures for ever and he will lack for nothing (cf Ps. 19:9; 34:9-10).

71. From created beings we come to know their Cause: from the differences between created beings we learn aboutthe indwelling Wisdom of creation: and from the natural activity of created beings we discern the indwellingLife of creation, the power which gives created beings their life - the Holy Spirit.

72. The Holy Spirit is not absent from any created being, especially not from one which in any way participates inintelligence. For being God and God's Spirit, He embraces in unity the spiritual knowledge of all created things,providentially permeating all things with His power, and vivifying their inner essences in accordance with theirnature. In this way He makes men aware of things done sinfully against the law of nature, and renders themcapable of choosing principles which are true and in conformity with nature. Thus we find many barbarians andnomadic peoples turning to a civilized way of life and setting aside the savage laws which they had kept amongthemselves from time immemorial.

73. The Holy Spirit is present unconditionally in all things, in that He embraces all things, provides for all, andvivifies the natural seeds within them. He is present in a specific- way in all who are under the Law, in that Heshows them where they have broken the commandments and enlightens them about the promise given con-cerning Christ. In all who are Christians He is present also in yet another way in that He makes them sons ofGod. But in none is He fully present as the author of wisdom except in those who have understanding, and whoby their holy way of life have made them-

selves fit to receive His indwelling and deifying presence. For everyone who

does not carry out the divine will, eventhough he is a believer, has a heart which, being a workshop of evil thoughts, lacks understanding, and a bodywhich, bemg always entangled in the defilements of the passions, is mortgaged to sin.

74. God, who yearns for the salvation of all men and hungers after their deification, withers their self-conceit likethe unfruitful fig tree (cf Matt. 21:19-21). He does this so that they may prefer to be righteous in reality rather

than in appearance, discarding the cloak of hypocritical moral display and genuinely pursuing a virtuous life inthe way that the divine Logos wishes them to. They will then live with reverence, revealing the state of theirsoul to God rather than displaying the external appearance of a moral life to their fellow-men.

75. The principle of active accomplishment is one thing and that of passive suffering is another. The principle ofactive accomplishment signifies the natural capacity for actualizing the virtues. The principle of passivesuffering signifies experiencing either the grace of what is beyond nature or the occurrence of what is contraryto nature. For just as we do not have a natural capacity for what is above being, so we do not by nature have acapacity for what lacks being. Thus we passively experience deification by grace as something which is abovenature, but we do not actively accomplish it; for by nature we do not have the capacity to attain deification.Again, we suffer evil as something contrary to nature which occurs in the will; for we do not have a naturalcapacity for generating evil. Thus while we are in our present state we can actively accomplish the virtues bynature, since we have a natural capacity for accomplishing them. But, when raised to a higher level, we experi-ence deification passively, receiving this experience as a free gift of grace.

76. We accomplish things actively in so far as our intelligence, whose natural task is to accomplish the virtues, isactive within us, and in so far as there is also active within us our intellect, which is capable of receivingunconditionally all spiritual knowledge, of transcending the entire nature of created beings and all that isknown, and of leaving all ages behind it. We experience things passively when, having completely transcendedthe inner essences of created beings, we come in a manner which is beyond conception to

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the Cause itself of created beings, aid there suspend the activity of our powers, together with all that is by naturefinite. Then we become something that is in no sense an achievement of our natural capacities, since nature does notpossess the power to grasp what transcends nature. For created things are not by nature able to accomplishdeification since they cannot grasp God. To bestow a consonant measure of deification on created beings is withinthe power of divine grace alone. Grace irradiates nature with a supra-natural light and by the transcendence of itsglory raises nature above its natural limits.

77. We cease to accomplish the virtues after this present stage of hfe. But, on a higher level than that of the virtues,we never cease to experience deification by grace. For an experience, or passion, which transcends nature islimitless, and so is always active and effective; while an experience, or passion, which is contrary to nature iswithout real existence, and so is impotent.

78. The qualities of the virtues and the inner principles of created beings are both images of divine blessings, and inthem God continually becomes man. As His body He has the qualities of the virtues, and as His soul the innerprinciples of spiritual knowledge. In this way He deifies those found worthy, giving them the true stamp ofvirtue and bestowing on them the essence of infallible knowledge.

79. An intellect faithful in the practice of the virtues is like St Peter when he was taken captive by Herod (cf Acts12:3-18). The name 'Herod" means "made of skins or leather", and so Herod signifies the law of leather, that is,the will of the flesh. St Peter is guarded by two squads of soldiers and shut in by an iron gate. The two squadssignify the attacks suffered by the intellect from the activity of the passions and from the mind's assent to thepassions. When through the teaching of practical philosophy, as though with the help of an angel, the intellecthas passed safely through these two squads or prisons, it comes to the iron gate which leads into the city. Bythis I mean the obdurate and stubborn attachment of the senses to sensible things. None the less, the gate isopened automatically through spiritual contemplation of the inner essences of created beings; and suchcontemplation then fearlessly impels the intellect, now liberated

from Herod's madness, towards the spiritualrealities where it truly belongs.

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80. The devil is both God's enemy and His avenger (cf. Ps. 8:2). He is God's enemy when he seems in his hatredfor God somehow to have acquired a destructive love form men, persuading us by means of sensual pleasure toassent to the passions within our control, and to value what is transitory more than what is eternal. In this wayhe seduces all our soul's desire, separatmg us utterly from divine love and making us willing enemies of Himwho made us. He is God's avenger when - now that we have become subject to him through sin - he lays barehis hatred for us and demands our punishment. For nothing pleases the devil more than punishing us. When hehas been given leave to carry this out, he contrives successive attacks of passions inflicted against our will, andlike a tempest he pitilessly assails us over whom, by God's permission, he has acquired authority. He does this.

not with the intention of fulfilhng God's command, but out of the desire to feed his own passion of hatredtowards us, so that the soul, sinking down enervated by the weight of such painful calamities, may cut itself offfrom the power of divine hope, regarding the onslaught of these calamities not as a divine admonition but as acause for disbelief in God.

8L When those who have acquired moral stability and contemplative knowledge employ these for the sake ofhuman glory, merely conveying an outward impression of the virtues, and uttering words of wisdom andknowledge without performing the corresponding actions, and when in addition they display to others theirvanity because of this supposed virtue and knowledge, then they are rightly handed over to commensuratehardships, in order to learn through suffering that humility which was unknown to them before because of theirempty conceit.

82. Each demon promotes the attack of this or that particular temptation according to his innate propensity. For onedemon is productive of one kind of

evil, while another is clearly more abominable than his fellow and has agreater propensity for some other form of evil.

83. Without divine permission even the demons themselves cannot assist the devil in any way at all. For it is GodHimself in His loving providence who allows the devil, in appropriate ways, to inflict various sufferingsthrough his ministers. The book of Job shows this plainly, describing as it does how the devil was utterly unableto approach Job unless God willed it (cf. Job 1:11-12).

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Real faith is faith which is manifest and active. Accordingly, to those engaged in the practice of the virtues theLogos of God is revealed embodied in the commandments, and as Logos He leads them by means of thesecommandments up to the Father, in whom He subsists by nature.

85. Reformation of life, angelic worship, the willing separation of the soul from the body, and the beginning ofdivine renewal in spirit - these are proclaimed in the veiled language of the New Testament. For instance, by theterm "spiritual circumcision" Scripture denotes the excision of the soul's impassioned attachment to the body

(cf Phil. 3:3; Col. 2:11).

86. Since God is fall of goodness and wishes utterly to eradicate from us the seed of evil - that is to say, the sensualpleasure which draws our intellect away from divine love - He allows the devil to afflict us with suffering andchastisement. In this way He scrapes the poison of past pleasure from our souls: and He seeks to implant in us ahatred and complete revulsion for the things which belong to this world and pander to the senses alone, bymaking us realize that once we have acquired them we gain nothing from their use save chastisement. For Hewishes to make the devil's power of chastisement and hatred of men the contingent cause of the return to virtueof those who have by their own free choice lapsed from it.

87. It is entirely fitting and just that those who gladly accept the devil's cunning suggestions to commit sins throughtheir own volition should also be chastised by him. For through the passions to which we willingly accede thedevil is the begetter of pleasure, and through the experiences that we suffer against our will he is the inflictor ofpain.

88. The contemplative and gnostic intellect is often committed for punishment to the devil, deservedly sufferinghardship and affliction at his hands. This is so that by suffering it may learn patiently to endure affliction ratherthan to trifle arrogantly to no purpose with things that do not exist.

89. If he who suffers for having transgressed one of God's commandments recognizes the principle of divineprovidence which is healing him, he accepts the affliction with joy and gratitude, and corrects the fault forwhich he is being disciplined. But if he is insensitive to this treatment, he is justly deprived of the grace that wasonce given him and is handed over to the turbulence of the

passions; he is abandoned so that he may acquire by ascetic labor those things for which he inwardly longs.

90. A person who, knowing what faults he has committed, wilhngly and with due thankfulness endures the trialspainfully inflicted on him as a consequence of these faults, is not exiled from grace or from his state of virtue;for he submits willingly to the yoke of the king of Babylon (cf Jer. 27:17) and pays off his debt by acceptingthe trials. In this way, while remainmg in a state of grace and virtue, he pays tribute to the king of Babylon notonly with his enforced sufferings, which have arisen out of the impassioned side of his nature, but also with hismental assent to these sufferings, accepting them as his due on account of his former offences. Through trueworship, by which I mean a humble disposition, he offers to God the correction of his offences.

91. If you do not accept gratefully the trials which, by God's permission, are

inflicted on you for your correction,and do not repent and rid yourself of your conceited opinion that you are righteous, you are given up tocaptivity, manacles, chains, hunger, death and the sword, and dwell a complete exile from your native land; foryou resist the just penalties decreed by God and refuse to submit willingly to the yoke of the king of Babylon, asGod has commanded. Banished in this way from your state of virtue and spiritual knowledge as if from yournative land, you suffer all these things and more besides, because in your pride and vain conceit you refuse tomake full satisfaction for your offences and to 'take delight in afflictions, calamities and hardships' (cf 2 Cor.12:10), as St Paul did. For he knew that the humility produced by bodily sufferings safeguards the divinetreasures of the soul; and for this reason he was content and endured patiently, both for his own sake and for thesake of those to whom he served as an example of virtue and faith, so that if they suffered when guilty, like theCorinthian who was censured (cf. 1 Cor. 5:1-5), they might have him who suffers innocently as anencouragement and as a model of patience.

92. If, instead of stopping short at the outward appearance which visible things present to the senses, you seek withyour intellect to contemplate their inner essences, seeing them as images of spiritual realities or as the inwardprinciples of sensible objects, you will be taught that nothing belonging to the visible world is unclean. For bynature all things were created good (cf. Gen. 1:31; Acts 10:15).

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93. He who is not affected by changes in sensible things practices the virtues in a manner that is truly pure. He whodoes not permit the outward appearances of sensible things to imprint themselves on his intellect has receivedthe true doctrine of created beings. He whose mind has outstripped the very being of created things has come, as

a true theologian, close to the One through unknowing.

94. Every contemplative intellect that has 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God' (Eph. 6:17), and thathas cut off in itself the activity of the visible

world, has attained virtue. When it has excised from itself theimage of sensible appearances it finds the truth existing in the inner essences of created beings, which is thefoundation of natural contemplation. And when it has transcended the being of created things, it will receive theillumination of the divine and unonginate Unity who is the foundation of the mystery of true theology.

95. God reveals Himself to each person according to each person's mode of conceiving Him. To those whoseaspiration transcends the complex structure of matter, and whose psychic powers are fully integrated in a singleunceasing gyration around God, He reveals Himself as Unity and Trinity. In this way He both shows forth Hisown existence and mystically makes known the mode in which that existence subsists. To those whoseaspiration is limited to the complex structure of matter, and whose psychic powers are not integrated. He revealsHimself not as He is but as they are, showing that they are completely caught in the material dualism wherebythe physical world is conceived as composed of matter and form.

96. St Paul refers to the different energies of the Holy Spirit as different gifts of grace, stating that they are allenergized by one and the same Holy Spirit (cf 1 Cor. 12:11). The "manifestation of the Spirit' (1 Cor. 12:7) isgiven according to the measure of every man's faith through participation in a particular gift of grace. Thusevery believer is receptive to the energy of the Spirit in a way that corresponds to his degree of faith and thestate of his souk and this energy grants him the capacity needed to carry out a particular commandment.

97. One person is given the quality of wisdom, another the quality of spiritual knowledge, another the quality offaith, and someone else one of the other gifts of the Spirit enumerated by St

Paul (cf. 1 Cor. 12:8-11). In the same way, one person receives through the Spirit according to the degree of hisfaith, the gift of that perfect and direct love for God which is free from all materiality; another through the sameSpirit receives the

gift of perfect love for his neighbor and another receives something else from the same Spirit. In

each, as I have said, the gift that conforms with his state is energized. For every capacity for fulfilhng acommandment is called a gift of the Spirit.

98. The baptism of the Lord (cf. Matt. 20:22) is the utter mortification of our propensity for the sensible world; andthe cup is the disavowal of our present mode of life for the sake of truth.

99. The baptism of the Lord typifies the sufferings we willingly embrace for the sake of virtue. Through theseSufferings we wash off the stains in our conscience and readily accept the death of our propensity for visiblethings. The cup typifies the involuntary trials which attack us in the form of adverse circumstances because ofour pursuit of the truth. If throughout these trials we value our desire for God more than nature, we willinglysubmit to the death of nature forced on us by these circumstances.

100.The baptism and the cup differ in this way: baptism for the sake of virtue mortifies our propensity for thepleasures of this life: the cup makes the devout value truth above even nature itself.

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1. Christ mentioned the cup before the baptism (cf Matt. 20:22) because virtue exists for the sake of truth but truthdoes not exist for the sake of virtue. Thus he who practices virtue for the sake of truth is not wounded by thearrows of self-esteem: but he who pursues truth for the sake of virtue does harbor the conceit which self-esteemgenerates.

2. Trath is divine knowledge, and virtue the struggles for trath on the part of those who desire it. A man whoendures the labors of virtue for the sake of such knowledge is not vainglorious, because he knows that truthcannot be grasped naturally through human effort. For it is not in the nature of things for what is primary to becircumscribed by what is secondary. But a man who expects to

attain knowledge by means of the struggles hemakes for the sake of virtue invariably suffers from self-esteem, because he imagines he has gained the victor'scrown before he has sweated for it. He does not know that labors exist for the sake of crowns, but crowns do notexist for the sake of labors. For by nature every spiritual method ceases to be practiced once the purpose forwhich it was intended-has been achieved or is thought to have been achieved.

3. He who seeks only the outward form of knowledge, that is, knowledge which is merely theoretical, and pursuesthe semblance of virtue that is, a merely theoretical morality, is puffed up, Judaic-wise, with the images of truth.

4. He who does not view the ritual of the Law with his senses alone, but noetically penetrates every visible symboland thoroughly assimilates the divine principle which is hidden in each, finds God in the Law. For rightly heuses his intellect to grope among the material forms of the Law, as among litter, in the hope of finding

hidden somewhere m its body that pearl or principle which utterly escapes the senses (cf Matt. 13:45-46).

5. Again, he who does not limit his perception of the nature of visible things to what his senses alone can observe,but wisely with his intellect searches after the essence which lies within every creature, also finds: God. forfrom the manifest magnificence of created beings he learns what is the Cause of their being.

6. Discrimination is the distinctive characteristic of one who probes. He then who examines the symbols of theLaw in a spiritual manner, and who contemplates the visible nature of created beings with intelligence, willdiscriminate m Scripture between letter and spirit, in creation between inner essence and outward appearance,and in himself between intellect and the senses; and in Scripture he will choose the spirit, in creation the inneressence or logos, and in himself the intellect. If he then unites these three mdissolubly to one

another, he willhave found God: he will have come to recognize, as he should and as is possible, the God who is Intellect,Logos and Spirit. In this way he will be delivered from all the things which deceive man and seduce him intoinnumerable errors - delivered, that is to say, from the letter, the outward appearance of things, and the senses,all of which possess quantitative distinctions and are the negation of unity. But if a man compounds the letter ofthe Law, the outward appearance of visible things, and his own senses with each other, he is 'so short-sighted asto be blind' (2 Pet. 1:9), sick through his ignorance of the Cause of created beings.

7. The apostle gives us the following definition of faith: 'Faith makes real for us things hoped for, gives assuranceof things not seen' (Heb. 11:1). One may also justly define it as an engrained blessing or as true knowledgedisclosing unutterable blessings.

8. Faith is a relational power or a relationship which brings about the immediate perfect and supranatural union ofthe believer with the God in whom he believes.

9. Since man is composed of body and soul, he is moved by two laws, that of the flesh and that of the spirit (cf.Rom. 7:23). The law of the flesh operates by virtue of the senses; the law of the Spirit operates by virtue of theintellect. The first law, operating by virtue of the senses automatically binds one closely to matter; the secondlaw, operating by virtue of the intellect, brings about direct union with God. Suppose there is someone whodoes not doubt in

his heart (cf. Mark 11:23) - that is to say, who does not dispute in his intellect - and through such doubt sever thatimmediate union with God which has been brought about by faith, but who is dispassionate or, rather, has alreadybecome god through union with God by faith: then it is quite natural that if such a person says to a mountain, "Go toanother place', it will go (cf. Matt. 17:20). The mountain here indicates the will and the law of the flesh, which isponderous and hard to shift, and in fact, so far as our natural powers are concerned; is totally

immovable andunshakeable.

10. The capacity for unintelligence is rooted so deeply in human nature through the senses that the majority thinkthat man is nothing more than flesh, which possesses sense faculties so that he can enjoy this present life.

11. 'All things are possible', says Scripture, 'for the person who believes' (Mark 9:23) and does not doubt - that isto say, for the person who is not dominated by his soul's attachment to the body through the senses, and so doesnot separate himself from the union with God which faith has brought about in him through the intellect.Whatever alienates the intellect from the world and the flesh brings it, perfected by its spiritual achievements,close to God. That is what should be understood as implied in the saying, "All things are possible for the personwho believes.'

12. Faith is knowledge that cannot be rationally demonstrated. If such knowledge cannot be rationallydemonstrated, then faith is a supranatural relationship through which, in an unknowable and so undemonstrablemanner, we are united with God in a union which is beyond intellection.

13. When the intellect is in direct union with God, that quality in it by virtue of which it apprehends and is

apprehended is completely in abeyance. As soon as it activates this quality by apprehending something sequentto God, it experiences doubt and severs the union which is beyond intellection. So long as the intellect is joinedto God in this union, and has passed beyond nature and become god by participation, it will have transposed thelaw of its nature as though shifting an immovable mountain.

14. He who has just begun to follow a holy way of life, and has received instruction about how to act righteously,devotes himself wholly to the practice of the virtues in all obedience and faith, nourishing himself, as if onmeat, on their manifest aspects, that is

to say, on moral training. The inner principles of the commandments, which constitute the knowledge of the perfect,in his faith he leaves to God, for he cannot as yet embrace the full magnitude of faith.

15. The perfect man, who has passed beyond the category not only of beginners but also of those who areadvancing, is not ignorant of the inner principles of the actions he performs in carrying out the commandments.On the contrary, he first spiritually imbibes those principles and then by means of his actions feeds upon thewhole body of the virtues. In this way he transposes to the plane of spiritual knowledge actions which take placein the sensible realm.

16. The Lord said, 'First seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness' (Matt. 6:33). That is, seek the knowledgeof truth before all things, and therefore seek training in appropriate methods of attaining it. In saying this. Heshowed clearly that believers must seek only divine knowledge and the virtue which adorns it withcorresponding actions.

17. Many are the things of which the believer has need in order to attain knowledge of God and virtue: deliverancefrom passions, patient acceptance of trials, the inner principles of virtues, the practice of methods of spiritualwarfare, the uprooting of the soul's predilection for the flesh, the breaking of the senses' attachment to sensibleobjects, the utter withdrawal of the intellect from all created things: and, in short, there are countless otherthings which help us to reject sin and ignorance and to attain knowledge and virtue. It was surely because of this

that the Lord said, 'Whatever you ask for in prayer, beheving, you will receive' (Matt. 21:22), stating simplythat the devout must seek and ask with understanding and faith for all those things, and for those alone, whichlead to virtue and knowledge of God. For all these things are profitable, and unquestionably the Lord gives themto those who ask.

18. Thus he who for the sake of faith alone - that is to say, for the sake of direct union with. God - seeks all thethings that contribute towards this union will unquestionably receive them. He who seeks either the thingswhich we have mentioned or other things without this motive will not receive them. For he has no faith, but likean unbeliever uses divine things to boost his own glory.

19. He who purges his will from the corruption of sin destroys the corrupting activity of what causes corruption.For when one's

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free will is itself free from corruption, it prevents nature from being corrupted by hostile forces and keeps itincorrupt through the providential grace of the Spirit within it.

20. Since the principles of nature and of grace are not one and the same, we should not be surprised if certain of thesaints sometimes resisted the passions and sometimes succumbed to them; for we know that the miracle ofresistance is due to grace, while the passion belongs to nature.

21. He who keeps in mind the way of the saints by imitating them not only shakes off the deadly paralysis of thepassions but also takes up the life of the virtues.

22. God, who before all ages set the bounds of each man's life, in the manner which He wills, leads every man,whether righteous or unrighteous, towards the final end he deserves.

23. As I take it, the dark storm which befell St Paul (cf. Acts 28:1-4) is the weight of involuntary trials and

temptations. The island is the firm unshakeable state of divine hope. The fire is the state of spiritual knowledge.The sticks are the nature of visible things. Paul gathered these with his hand, which I take to mean with theexploratory capacity of the intellect during contemplation. He fed the state of spiritual knowledge withconceptual images derived from the nature of visible things, for the state of spiritual knowledge heals the mentaldejection produced by the storm of trials and temptations. The viper is the cunning and destructive powerhidden secretly in the nature of sensible thmgs. It bites the hand, that is, the exploratory noetic activity ofcontemplation, but without harming the visionary intellect; and this,

with the light of spiritual knowledge, as ifwith fire at once destroys the destructive power that arises from the contemplation of sensible things and thatattaches itself to the practical activity of the intellect.

24. St Paul was a 'scent of life, leading to life' (2 Cor. 2:16) because he inspired the faithful by his own example toexperience the fragrance of the virtues by putting them into practice, or because like a preacher he led thosewho had been converted by the word of grace away from life in the senses to life in the spirit. 'The scent ofdeath leading to death' {ibid) gives a taste of their future condemnation to those who go from the death ofignorance to the death of unbelief. Or, alternatively, the 'scent of life, leading to life" refers to those who haveadvanced from the life of ascetic prac-

tice to that of contemplation, and the 'scent of death, leading to death' refers to those who have passed from themortification of whatever is earthly in their nature (ef Col. 3:5j to the blessed mortification of impassionedconceptual images and fantasies.

25. The soul has three powers: the intelligence, the mcensive power and desire. With our intelligence we direct oursearch; with our desire we long for that supernal goodness which is the object of our search; and with ourincensive power we fight to attain our object. With these powers these who love God cleave to the divineprinciple of virtue and spiritual knowledge. Searching with the first power, desiring with the second, andfighting by means of the third, they receive incorruptible nourishment, enriching the intellect with the spiritualknowledge of created beings.

26. When the Logos of God became man. He filled human nature once more with the spiritual knowledge that ithad lost; and steeling it against changefulness. He deified it, not in its essential nature but in its quality. Hestamped it completely with His own Spirit, as if adding wine to water so as to give the water the quality of wine.For He becomes truly man so that by grace He may

make us gods.

27. When God created human nature, at the same time as He gave it being and free will He joined to it the capacityfor carrying out the duties laid upon it. By this capacity I mean the impulse implanted in human nature on thelevel of both being and free will: on the level of being, so that man has the power to achieve the virtues; on thelevel of free will, so that he may use this power in the right way.

28. We have as a natural criterion the law of nature. This teaches us that, before we can acquire the wisdom that liesin all things, we must through mystical initiation seek their Maker. ,

29. Jacob's well (cf John 4:5-15) is Scripture. The water is the spiritual knowledge found in Scripture. The depth ofthe well is the meaning, only to be attamed with great difficulty, of the obscure sayings in Scripture. The bucketis learning gained from the written text of the word of God, which the Lord did not possess because He is theLogos Himself; and so He does not give believers the knowledge that comes from leammg and study, but grantsto those found worthy ever-flowing waters of wisdom that spill from the fountain of spiritual grace and neverrun dry. For the bucket - that is to

say, learning - can only grasp a very small amount of knowledge and leaves behind all that it cannot lay hold of,however it tries. But the knowledge which is received through grace, without study, contains all the wisdom thatman can attain, springing forth in different ways according to his needs.

30. There is a great and unutterable difference between the tree of life and the one which is not the tree of life. Thisis clear simply from the fact that the one is called the tree of life while the other is merely called the tree of theknowledge of good and evil (cf Gen. 2:9). Unquestionably, the tree of life is productive of life; the tree that isnot called the tree of life, and so is not productive of life, is

obviously productive of death. For only death is theopposite of life.

31. The tree of life, when understood as symbolizing wisdom, likewise differs greatly from the tree of theknowledge of good and evil, in that the latter neither symbolizes wisdom nor is said to do so. Wisdom ischaracterized by intellect and intelligence, the state which is opposite to wisdom by lack of intelligence and bysensation.

32. Since man came into being composed of noetic soul and sentient body, one interpretation could be that the treeof life is the soul's intellect, which is the seat of wisdom. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil wouldthen be the body's power of sensation, which is clearly the seat of mindless impulses. Man received the divinecommandment not to involve himself actively and experientially with these impulses: but he did not keep thecommandment.

33. Both trees in Scripture symbolize the intellect and the senses. Thus the intellect has the power to discriminatebetween the spiritual and the sensible, between the eternal and the transitory. Or rather, as the soul'sdiscriminatory power, the intellect persuades the soul to cleave to the first and to transcend the second. Thesenses have the power to discriminate between pleasure and pain in the body. Or rather, as a power existing in abody endowed with soul and sense-perception, they persuade the body to embrace pleasure and reject pain.

34. If a man exercises only sensory discrimination between pain and pleasure in the body, thus transgressing thedivine commandment, he eats from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that is to say, he succumbs; tothe mindless impulses that pertain to the senses; for he possesses only the body's power of discrimination.

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which makes him embrace pleasure as something good and avoid pain as something evil. Bat if he exercises onlythat noetic discrimination which distinguishes between the eternal and the transitory, and so keeps the

divinecommandment, he eats from the tree of life, that is to say, from the wisdom that appertains to his intellect; for heexercises only the power of discrimination associated with the soul, which makes him cleave to the glory of what iseternal as something good, and avoid the corruption of what is transitory as something evil.

35. Goodness so far as the intellect is concerned is a dispassionate predilection for the spirit; evil is an impassionedattachment to the senses. Goodness so far as the senses are concerned is tile impassioned activity of the bodyunder the stimulus of pleasure; evil is the state destitute of such activity.

36. He who persuades his conscience to regard the evil he is doing as good by nature reaches out with his moralfaculty as with a hand and grasps the tree of life in a reprehensible manner; for he thinks that what is thoroughlyevil is by nature immortal. Therefore God, who has implanted in man's conscience a natural hatred of evil, cutshim off from life, for he has now become evil in his will and intention. God acts in this way so that when a mandoes wrong he cannot persuade his own conscience that what is thoroughly evil is good by nature.

37. The vine produces wine, the wine drunkenness and dnmkenness an evil form of ecstasy. Similarly theintelligence - which is the vine - when well-nurtured and cultivated by the virtues, generates spiritualknowledge: and such knowledge produces a good form of ecstasy which enables the intellect to transcend itsattachment to the senses.

38. It is the devil's practice maliciously to confound the forms and shapes of sensible things with our conceptualimages of them. Through these forms and shapes are generated passions for the outward aspects of visiblethings, and our intellectual energy, being halted at the level of what pertains to sense-perception, cannot raiseitself to the realm of mtelligible realities. In this way the devil despoils the soul and drags it down into theturmoil of the passions.

39. The Logos of God is at the same time both a lamp and a light (cf Ps. 119:105: Prov. 6:23). For he humiliatesthose thoughts of the faithful which are in accordance with nature, but bums those

which are contrary to nature; He dispels the darkness of sensory life for those who press forward by means of thecommandments towards the life that they hope for, but punishes with the fire of judgment those who willfully cleaveto the dark night of this present life because of their love for the flesh.

40. It is said that he who does not first reintegrate himself with his own being by rejecting those passions which arecontrary to nature will not be reintegrated with the Cause of his being - that is, with God - by acquiringsupranatural blessings through grace. For he who would truly unite himseh" with God must first separate himselfmentally from created things.

41. The function of the written Law is to deliver men from passions; that of the natural law is to grant equal rightsto all men in accordance with natural justice. The fulfillment of the spiritual law is to attain similitude to God, inso far as this is possible for man.

42. The intellect has by nature the capacity to receive a spiritual knowledge of corporeal and incorporeal things; butby grace alone does it receive revelations of tike Holy Trinity. While believing that the Trinity exists, the humanintellect can never presume to grasp what the Trinity is in Its essence, in the way that this is known to the divineIntellect. The person without spiritual knowledge is completely ignorant of the way in which sin is purged byvirtue.

43. He who loves falsehood is handed over to be harrowed by it, so that by suffering he may come to know what itis he willingly pursued, and may learn by experience that he mistakenly embraced death instead of life.

44. God has knowledge only of what is good, because He is in essence the nature and the knowledge of what isgood. He is ignorant of evil because He has no capacity for evil. Only of those thmgs for which by nature Hepossesses the capacity does He also possess the essential knowledge.

45. The breast mentioned in Leviticus (cf Lev. 7:30, 34) indicates the higher form of contemplation. The shoulder(cf. Lev. 7:32, 34) stands for the mental state and activity concordant with the life of ascetic practice. Thus thebreast and the shoulder denote respectively ritual knowledge and virtue for spiritual

knowledge leads theintellect directly to God Himself, while virtue in the life of ascetic practice separates it from all involvement ingeneration. In the text m question, breast and shoulder were set aside for the

priests, who alone possessed the Lord as their inheritance for ever and had no share at all in earthly things.

46. These fully endowed by the Spirit with spiritual knowledge and virtue are able, through preaching andinstruction, to make the hearts of others receptive of true devotion and faith, withdrawing their disposition and

capacity from its preoccupation with corruptible nature and directing it towards the actuahzation of supra-natural and incorruptible blessings. It is therefore fitting that in this same text the breast of the victims offered insacrifice to God - that is, the hearts of those who offer themselves to God - and the shoulder - that is, their life ofascetic practice - should be set aside for the priests.

47. Compared with the righteousness of the age to be, all earthly righteousness fulfils the role of a mirror: itcontains the image of archetypal realities, not the realities: themselves as they subsist in their true and universalnature. And compared with knowledge there, all spiritual knowledge in this world is an indistinct image - itcontains a reflection of the truth but not the truth itself as it is destined to be revealed (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12).

48. Since what is divine consists in virtue and spiritual knowledge, the mirror displays the archetypes of virtue andthe indistinct image reveals the archetypes of spiritual knowledge.

49. He who has conformed his life to God's will through practice of the virtues transposes his intellect to the realmof intelligible realities by means of contemplation. By so doing he places himself utterly beyond the reach ofeverything that seeks to entrap him, and so is not attracted through some

sensory image towards the death thatlies in the passions.

50. The person who with the clear eye of faith beholds the beauty of the blessings of the age to be readily obeys thecommand to leave his country and his kindred and his father's house (cf. Gen. 12:1), and he abandons the flesh,the senses and sensory things, together with passionate attachments and inclinations. In times of temptation andconflict he rises above nature because he has put the Cause of nature first, just as Abraham put God before Isaac(cf Gen. 22:1-14).

51. So long as you do not pursue virtue or study Holy Scripture for the sake of glory, or as a cloak for greed (cf. 1Thess. 2:5), or from love of flattery and popularity, or for self-display, but do and

say and think all things for the sake of God, then you are walking with spiritual knowledge in the way of truth. If,however, you have in some respects 'prepared the way for the Lord", yet have not "made His, paths straight'. He willnot come to dwell within you (cf. Isa. 40:3. LXX: Mark 1:3).

52. If you fast and avoid a mode of life which excites the passions, and in general do whatever contributes to yourdeliverance from evil, then you have "prepared the way for the Lord'. But if you do these things out of self-esteem, or greed, or love of flattery, or for some similar motive, and not with a desire to perform God's will,then you have not 'made His paths straight'. You have endured the labor of preparing the way but do not haveGod walking in your paths.

53. "Every valley shall be filled' - yet not "every' without qualification, or 'everyone's valley', for the text does notrefer to the valley of those who have not prepared the way of the Lord and made His paths straight. By a valleyIS meant the flesh or soul of those who have prepared the way of the Lord and made His paths straight in themanner I have explained. When such a valley has been filled with spiritual knowledge and virtue by the divineLogos who, present in His

commandments, walks in its paths, then all the spirits of false knowledge and evil are'abased': for the Logos treads them down and brings them into subjection. He overthrows that cunning powerwhich has raised itself up against human nature: He levels it as if it were high and massive mountains and hillswhich He uses to fill in the valleys. For the rejection of passions which are contrary to nature, and the receptionof virtues which are in accordance with nature, fills up the valley-like soul and abases the exalted lordship of theevil spirits (Isa. 40:4. LXX).

54. The "rough places' - that is to say, the attacks of trials and temptations suffered against our will - shall be made'smooth', above all when the intellect, rejoicing and delighting in weakness, affliction and calamity, through itsunsought sufferings deprives of all their lordship the passions in which we deliberately indulge. For by 'roughplaces' Scripture means those experiences of unsought trials and temptations which change to smooth wayswhen endured with patience and thankfulness (cf Isa. 40:4. LXX).

55. He who longs for the true life knows that all suffering, whether sought or unsought, brings death to sensualpleasure, the

mother of death: and so he gladly accepts the harsh attacks of trials and temptations suffered against his will. Bypatiently enduring them he turns afflictions into smooth untroubled paths, unerringly leading whoever devoutly runsthe divine race along them towards 'the prize of the high calling' (Phil. 3:14). For sensual pleasure is the mother of

death and the death of such pleasure is suffering, whether freely chosen or not.

56. Everyone, then, who through self-restraint does away with sensual pleasure, which is intricate, convoluted andintertwined in many ways with every sensible object, makes the crooked straight. And he who with patiencewithstands and defeats the harsh implacable bouts of suffering turns the rough places into

smooth ways. Thus,when a person has well and truly struggled, has defeated sensual pleasure with desire for virtue, has overcomepain with love for spiritual knowledge, and through both virtue and knowledge has bravely persevered to theend of the divine contest, he will see, according to Scripture, 'the salvation of God': and this will be his rewardfor virtue and for the efforts he has made to attain it (Isa. 40:4-5. LXX).

57. The lover of virtue willingly puts out the fire of sensual pleasure. And if a man has dedicated his intellect to theknowledge of truth, he will not allow unsought sufferings to thwart the ceaseless aspiration that leads himtowards God.

58. When through self-control you have straightened the crooked paths of the passions in which you deliberatelyindulged - that is to say, the impulses of sensual pleasure - and when, by enduring patiently the harsh andpainful afflictions produced by trials and temptations suffered against your will, you have made the rough wayssmooth and even, then you may expect to see God's salvation, for you will have become pure in heart. In thisstate of purity, through the virtues and through holy contemplation, you will at the end of your contest beholdGod, in accordance with Christ's words: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Matt. 5:8). Andbecause of the sufferings you have endured for the sake of virtue you will receive the gift of dispassion. Tothose who possess this gift there is nothmg which reveals God more fully.

59. In Scripture hearts capable of receiving the heavenly gifts of holy knowledge are called cisterns (cf. 2 Chr.26:10). They have been hewn out by the firm principle of the commandments; they

have been cleared, as if of earth, of self-indulgence in the passions and of natural attachment to sensible thmgs: andthey have been filled with that spiritual knowledge which purges the passions and gives life and sustenance to the

virtues.

60. The Lord hews out cisterns in the desert, that is to say, m the world and in human nature. He excavates thehearts of those who are worthy, clears them of their material sordidness and arrogance, said makes them deepand wide in order to receive-the divine rains of wisdom and knowledge. He does this so that they may waterChrist's flocks, those who need moral Instruction because of die immaturity of their souls.

61. Scripture refers to the higher form of the spiritual contemplation of nature as 'hill-country' (Deut. 11:11). Itscultivators are those who have rejected the images derived from sensible objects, and have advanced to aperception of the noetic essences of these objects through the acquisition of the virtues.

62. So long as the intellect continuously remembers God, it seeks the Lord through contemplation, not superficiallybut in the fear of the Lord, that is, by practicing the commandments. For he who seeks Him throughcontemplation without practicing the commandments does not find Him: he has not sought Him in the fear ofthe Lord and so the Lord does not guide him to success. The Lord guides to success all who combine thepractice of the virtues with spiritual knowledge: He teaches them the qualities of the commandments andreveals to them the true inner essences of created beings.

63. Sublime knowledge about God stands in the soul like a tower, fortified with the practice of the commandments.That is the meaning of the text, 'Uzriah built towers in Jerusalem" (2 Chr. 26:9). A man builds towers inJerusalem when he is blessed with success in his search for the Lord through contemplation accompanied by therequisite fear, that is, by observing the commandments; for he then establishes the principles of divineknowledge in the undivided and tranquil state of his soul.

64. When the inner principles of particulars combine with those of universals, they brmg about the union of what isdivided. This is because the more universal a principle is, the greater the degree to which it embraces andunifies the more particular principles. Particulars usually have a natural affinity with universals. But there isalso a

certain spiritual principle which relates the intellect to the senses, heaven to earth, sensibles to intelligibles, and

nature to the principle of nature, uniting them one with another.

65. If you have been able to free your senses from the passions and have separated your soul from its attachment tothe senses, you will have succeeded in barring the devil from entering the intellect by means of the senses. It isto this end that you should build safe towers in the desert (cf 2 Chr. 26:10). By 'desert" is meant naturalcontemplation: by 'safe towers' a true understanding of the nature of created beings. If you take refuge in thesetowers, you will not fear the demons who raid this desert - that is, who insinuate themselves into the nature ofvisible thmgs, deceiving the intellect through the senses and dragging it off into the darkness of ignorance. Ifyou acquire a true understanding of each thing, you will not be afraid of the demons who deceive men by meansof the external appearance of sensible objects.

66. Every intellect that has the power to contemplate is a trae cultivator: so long as it has the remembrance of Godto sustain it, it keeps the seeds of divine goodness dear of tales through its own diligence and solicitude. For it issaid, 'And with fear of the Lord he sought God in the days of Zechariah' (2 Chr. 26:5. LXX). 'Zechariah'means 'remembrance of God'. So let us always pray to God to keep this saving remembrance alive in us, lestwhat our intellect has achieved corrupts our soul, filling it with pride and encouraging it to aspirepresumptuously, like Uzziah, to what is above nature (cf 2 Chr. 26:16).

67. Only a soul which has been delivered from the passions can without error contemplate created beings. Becauseits virtue is perfect, and because its knowledge is spiritual and free from materiality, such a soul is called'Jerusalem'. This state is attained through exclusion not only of the passions but also of sensible images.

68. Without faith, hope and love (cf. 1 Cor. 13:13) nothing sinful is totally abolished, nor is anything good fullyattained. Faith urges the beleaguered intellect to press on towards God and encourages it by equipping it with afull range of spiritual weapons. Hope is the intellect's surest pledge of divine help

and promises the destructionof hostile powers. Love makes it difficult or, rather, makes it utterly impossible for the intellect to estrange itselffrom

the tender care of God; and when the intellect is under attack, love impels it to concentrate its whole natural powerinto longing for the divine.

69. Faith encourages the beleaguered inteUect and strengthens it with the hope of assistance. Hope brings before itseyes this help promised by faith and drives off the enemy's attack. Love kills the enemy's provocations withinthe devout intellect, utterly obliterating them with deep longing for the divine.

70. The first and unique effect of the divme gift of genuine spiritual knowledge is to produce within us by faith theresurrection of God. Faith needs to be accompanied, by the right ordering of our will and purpose - that is tosay, by discrimination - which makes it possible for us bravely to withstand the spate of trials and temptations,sought or unsought. Thus faith, rightfully expressing itself through the fulfillment of the commandments, is thefirst resurrection withm us of the God whom we have slain through our ignorance.

71. The return to God clearly implies the fullest affirmation of hope in Him, for without this nobody can accept Godin any way at all. For it is characteristic of hope that it brings future things before us as if they were present, andso it assures those who are attacked by hostile powers that God, in whose name and for whose sake the saints gointo battle, protects them and is in no way absent. For without some expectation, pleasant or unpleasant, no onecan ever undertake a return to the divine.

72. Nothing so much as love brings together those who have been sundered and produces in them an effective unionof will and purpose. Love is distinguished by the beauty of recognizing the equal value of all men. Love is bomin a man when his soul's powers - that is, his intelligence, mcensive power and desire - are concentrated andunified around the divine. Those who by grace have come to

recognize the equal value of all men in God's sightand who engrave His beauty on their memory, possess an ineradicable longing for divine love, for such love isalways imprinting this beauty on their intellect.

73. Every intellect girded with divine authority possesses three powers as its counselors and ministers. First, there isthe intelligence. It is intelligence which gives birth to that faith, founded upon spiritual knowledge, whereby theintellect learns that God is always

present in an unutterable way, and through which it grasps, with the aid of hope, things of the future as though theywere present. Second, there is desire. It is desire which generates that divine love through which the intellect, whenof its own free will it aspires to pure divinity, is wedded in an indissoluble manner to this aspiration. Third, there isthe incensive power. It is with this power that the intellect cleaves to divine peace and concentrates its desire on

divine love. Every intellect possesses these three powers, and they cooperate with it in order to purge evil and toestablish and sustain holiness.

74. Without the power of intelligence there is no capacity for spiritual knowledge; and without spiritual knowledgewe cannot have the faith from which springs that hope whereby we grasp things of the future as though theywere present. Without the power of desire there is no longing, and so no love, which is the issue of longing; forthe property of desire is to love something. And without the incensive power, intensifying the desire for unionwith what is loved, there can be no peace, for peace is truly the complete and undisturbed possession of what isdesired.

75. Until you have been completely purified from the passions you should not engage in natural contemplationthrough the images of sensible things; for until then such images are able to mould your intellect so that itconforms to passion. An intellect which, fed by the senses, dwells in imagination on the visible

aspects ofsensible things becomes the creator of impure passions, for it is not able to advance through contemplation tothose intelligible realities cognate with it.

76. When faced with the eruption of the passions, you should courageously close your senses and totally reject theimages and memories of sensible things, and in every way restrict the intellect's natural tendency to investigatethings in the external world. Then, with God's help, you will abase and overcome the cunning tyrannical powerwhich rises up against you.

77. When intelligence is stupefied, the incensive power precipitate and desire mindless, and when ignorance, adomineering spirit and licentiousness govern the soul, then sm becomes a habit, actively entangling one m thevarious pleasures of the senses.

78. The mature intellect must with spiritual knowledge escape from invisible entanglements. While it is beingprovoked by evil

powers it must not engage in natural contemplation or do anything but pray, tame the body with hardship, diligentlybring the earthly will into subjection, and guard the walls of the city, that is, the virtues which protect the soul or the

qualities which guard the virtues, namely, self-control and patience. Otherwise he who proffers the soul a foulpotion may deceive the intellect with what seems to be good and secretly turn its desire away from God, drawing itsunderstanding, which seeks what is good, towards what is bad, because it has mistaken the bad for the good.

79. The person who courageously closes his senses by means of the deliberate and all-embracing practice of self-control and patience, and prevents sensory forms from entering the intellect through the soul's faculties, easilyfrustrates the wicked schemes of the devil and turns him back, abased, along the way by which

he came. Theway by which the devil comes consists of material things which seem to be needed for sustaining the body.

80. The intellect reaps true knowledge from natural contemplation when, in a way that conforms to nature, it unitesthe senses to itself by means of the intelligence.

81. When Scripture speaks of the springs blocked up by Hezekiah outside the city (cf 2 Chr. 32:3-4. LXX), the citysignifies the soul and the springs the totality of sensible things. The waters of these springs are conceptualimages of sensible things. The river that flows through the middle of the city is knowledge gathered in naturalcontemplation from these conceptual images of sensible things. This knowledge passes through the middle ofthe soul because it links the intellect and the senses. For the knowledge of sensible things is not entirelyunconnected with the noetic faculty, nor does it depend altogether on the activity of the senses. On the contrary,it is as it were the intermediary between the intellect and the senses and between the senses and the intellect,and itself brings about the union of the two with each other. So far as the senses are concerned, it impresses onthem the forms of sensible things, each according to its own kind; so far as the intellect is concerned, ittransmutes these impressions into the inner essences of the forms. It is therefore fitting that the knowledge ofvisible things should be described as a river flowing through the middle of the city, for it occupies the middleground between the intellect and the senses.

82. If during periods of temptation and trial you refrain from natural contemplation and hold fast to prayer,withdrawing your intellect from all things and focusing it on itself and on God, you will put to death the inwarddisposition which produces evil and you will send the devil packing with his tail between his legs. For it was the

devil who insinuated this habit into you and, relying on it, he boastfully approached your soul, vilifying truthwith proud thoughts. David who had vast

experience in the front line of every kind of spiritual battle, was mostlikely not simply familiar with these tactics but actually put them into practice: for he says: 'While the wickedone stood before me I was dumb and humbled myself and refrained from uttering even good words' (Ps. 39:1-2.LXX). Jeremiah, in the same spirit, warned the people not to go out of the city because the sword of the enemylay about it (cf. Jer. 6:25).

83. We may apply this also to Cain and Abel (cf Gen. 4:8). Cain is the law of the flesh, and the field into whichCain and Abel went is the realm of natural contemplation. Had Abel kept guard over himself and had he notgone out with Cain into the field before attaining dispassion, then the law of the flesh would not have risen upand killed him, cleverly deceiving him when he was engaged in the contemplation of created beings beforebeing fully prepared.

84. Similarly, if Dinah the child of Jacob had not gone out to the daughters of the land - that is, into the world ofsensible images - Shechem the son of Hamor would not have risen up and humiliated her (cf. Gen. 34:1 -2).

85. We should abstain from natural contemplation until we are fully prepared, lest in trying to perceive the spiritualessences of visible creatures we reap passions by mistake. For the outward forms of visible things have greaterpower over the senses of those who are immature than the essences hidden in the forms of things have over theirsouls. Of course, those who confine their minds Judaic-wise to the letter alone expect the promises of divineblessings to be fulfilled m this present age, for they are ignorant of the qualities naturally inherent in the soul.

86. He who 'wears the image of Him who is from heaven" (1 Cor. 15:49) tries to follow the spirit of Holy Scripturein all things, for it is the spirit which, by promoting virtue and spiritual knowledge, sustains the soul. He who'wears the image of him who is from earth' pays heed only to the letter, for the cultivation of the body by

means of the senses is promoted by the letter. Such cultivation in its turn generates the passions.

87. By the power of God is meant the virtue that destroys the passions and safeguards holy thoughts. Such virtue isgenerated by the practice of the commandments: in this way, with God's co-operation or, rather, by His strengthalone, we destroy the forces of evil that are opposed to sanctity. By God's sublimity is meant the spiritualknowledge of the truth, realized through our efforts to attain the contemplation of created beings and thepractice of the virtues. Through spiritual knowledge we utterly annihilate the truth-opposing power offalsehood, abasing and demolishing the vaunting self-assertion of the evil spirits that exalt themselves againstthe knowledge of God (cf 2 Cor. 10:5). For just as ascetic practice gives birth to virtue, so contemplationengenders spiritual knowledge.

88. Ineffaceable knowledge, whose spiritual gyration around God's infinitude is unconditioned and beyondintellection, images in its unconditionality the more than infinite glory of the truth. The voluntary imitation ofdivine wisdom and goodness brings as its reward the intellect's longing for and glorious attainment of likenessto God, in so far as this is possible for man.

89. The tongue is a symbol of the soul's spiritual energy and the larynx a symbol of natural self-love for the body.Thus he who ignobly welds the one to the other cannot give his attention to the tranquil state of virtue andspiritual knowledge, for he sedulously indulges in the confusion of bodily passions.

90. Appetites and pleasures which are in accordance with nature are not reprehensible, since they are a necessaryconsequence of natural appetency. For our ordinary food, whether we wish it or not, naturally producespleasure, since it satisfies the hunger which precedes a meal. Drink: also produces pleasure, since it relieves thediscomfort of thirst; so does sleep, since it renews the strength expended in our waking hours, and so, too, do allour other natural functions necessary for maintaining life and conducive to the acquisition of virtue. But everyintellect that is trying to escape from the confusion of sin transcends such passions, lest through them it remainsa slave to passions which are subject to our control, contrary to nature and reprehensible; for these have noground in us other than the activity of the passions which are m accordance with nature.

although not on that account destined to accompany us into immortal and everlasting life.

9L If the words of God are uttered merely as verbal expressions, and their message is not rooted in the virtuousway of life of those who utter them, they will not be heard. But if they are uttered through the practice of thecommandments, their sound has such power that they dissolve the demons and dispose men eagerly to buildtheir hearts into temples of God through making progress in works of righteousness.

92. Just as God in His essence cannot be the object of man's spiritual knowledge, so not even His teaching can befully embraced by our understanding. For though Holy Scripture, being restricted chronologically to the timesof the events which it records, is limited where the letter is concerned, yet in spirit it always remains unlimitedas regards the contemplation of intelligible realities.

93. If you want to absorb the precise spintual sense of Holy Scripture in a way that accords with Christ's wishes,you must train yourself diligently in the interpretation of names, for in this way you can elucidate the meaningof alt that is written. But you must not Judaic-wise drag the sublimity of the Spirit down to the level of the bodyand the earth, and limit the divine inviolate promise of spiritual blessings to thmgs corrupt and transitory.

94. Since a vow is a promise of some good thing offered by man to God, it may clearly be inferred that prayer ispetition for the blessings bestowed by God on man with a view to his salvation and as a reward for the goodinner state of those who make the prayer. Succor is the gift and growth, in the face of demonic attack, ofvirtuous qualities pursued through the practice of the ascetic life and of spiritual vision pursued through the lifeof contemplation. In the cry for such succor God naturally pays heed above all not to the loudness with which itis uttered but to the inner state of virtue and spiritual knowledge possessed by those who utter it.

95. The evil and destructive kingdom of the devil - typified by kmgdom of the

Assyrians (cf. 2 Kgs. 18:11) - hasorganized a war against virtue and spiritual knowledge, plotting to pervert the soul through the soul's innatepowers. First it stimulates the soul's desire to develop an appetite for what is contrary to nature, and persuades itto prefer sensible to intelligible things. Then it rouses the soul's mcensive power to struggle with all its might inorder to

attain the sensible object which it desires. Finally it teaches the soul's intelligence how to contrive opportunities forsensual pleasure.

96. In His supreme goodness God has not only made the divine and incorporeal essences of noetic realities imagesof His unutterable glory, each in its own way reflecting, in so far as this is granted, the supra-noetic splendor ofHis unapproachable beauty; He also permeates with echoes of His majesty things that are sensory and farinferior to noetic essences. These enable the human intellect, mounted upon them and carried above all visiblethings, to journey towards God and to attain the summit of blessedness.

97. Every intellect crowned with virtue and spiritual knowledge is appointed like the great Hezekiah to rule overJerusalem (cf. 2 Kgs. 18:1-2) - that is to say, over the state in which one beholds only peace and which is freefrom all passions. For Jerusalem means 'vision of peace'. Through the forms which fill creation, such anintellect has the whole of creation under its sovereignty. Through the intellect creation offers as gifts to God thespiritual principles of knowledge that lie within it; and as gifts to the intellect it presents the qualities conduciveto virtue which exist within it in accordance with the law of nature. Both through the principles of spiritualknowledge and through the qualities of virtue creation honors the intellect so admirably fitted to make right useof both - the philosophic intellect perfected in both intelligence and action through contemplation and thepractice of the ascetic life.

98. He who has attained the summit of virtue and spiritual knowledge through the practice of the ascetic life andcontemplation naturally transcends, every

carnal and reprehensible passion; he also surmounts the condition ofso-called natural bodies, that is, of beings subject to generation and corruption. In short, through contemplationhe gains spiritual knowledge of the inner essences of all sensible forms and passes beyond them, raising hisintellect to the divine realities that are akm to it.

99. When, thanks to the hardships you have undergone in the practice of the virtues, you are appointed to dwell inthe state of dispassion as though in Jerusalem and, freed from all the disturbance of sin, you practice, speak,hear and think nothing but peace; and when, after that, you have received through natural contemplation anunderstanding of the nature of visible things - a nature which

offers through you as gifts to the Lord the divine essences dwelhng within it, and presents to you, as if presentinggifts to a king, the laws that he within it - then you are "magnified in sight of all nations' (2 Chr. 32:23). For you arenow above all things: through the practice of the virtues you have risen above natural bodies and the passions of theflesh, and through contemplation you have passed beyond the indwelling spiritual essences and qualities of altsensible forms.

100.Practical philosophy sets above the passions the man who practices the virtues. Contemplation establishesabove visible things the man who attains spiritual knowledge, raising his intellect to the noetic realities akin toit.

The person who combines spiritual knowledge with the practice of the virtues

and practice of the virtues withspiritual knowledge is a throne and a footstool of God (cf Isa. 66:1) - a throne because of his spiritualknowledge and a footstool because of his ascetic practice. And. the human intellect, purified of all materialimages and occupied or, rather, adorned with the divine principles of the noetic world, is a heaven itself.

When any philosopher - any devout philosopher - fortified with virtue and spiritual knowledge, or with asceticpractice and contemplation, sees the power of evil rising up against him through the passions, like the king ofthe Assyrians rising up against Hezekiah (cf. 2 Kgs. 18:13-16; Isa. 36:1-2), he is aware that Only with God'shelp can he escape. He invokes God's mercy by crying out silently and by striving to advance still further invirtue and knowledge; and he receives as an ally, or rather as his salvation, an angel, that is, one of the higherprinciples of wisdom and knowledge, who cuts off 'every mighty man, warrior, leader and commander in thecamp' (2Chr.32:21).

Every passion has its origin in the corresponding sensible object. For without some object to attract the powersof the soul through the medium of the senses, no passion would ever be generated. In other words, without asensible object a passion does not come into being: without a woman there is no unchastity; without food there

is no gluttony: without gold there is no love of money, and so on. Thus at the origin of every impassionedstimulation of our natural powers there is a sensible object or, in other terms, a demon inciting the soul tocommit sin by means of the sensible object.

4. Attrition suppresses the actualization of sin; obliteration destroys even the thought of it. For attrition preventsthe realization

of the impassioned act, while obliteration completely annihilates all demonic motivation in the mind itself.

5. Sensible and noetic realities lie between God and man. When the human intellect moves towards God ittranscends them, provided that it is not enslaved to sensible realities through outward activity and is notdominated in any way by the noetic realities it beholds during contemplation.

6. Creation is the accuser of the ungodly. For through its inherent spiritual principles creation proclaims its Maker;and through the natural laws intrinsic to each individual species it instructs us in virtue. The spiritual principlesmay be recognized in the unremitting continuance of each individual species, the laws in the consistency of itsnatural activity. If we do not ponder on these things, we remain ignorant of the cause of created being and wecling to all the passions which are contrary to nature.

7. Scripture exhorts us to offer gifts to God so that we may become conscious of His infinite goodness. For Godreceives our offerings as if they were entirely our own gifts and He had not already given us anything. In thisway God's untold goodness towards us is fully evident, for when we offer Him things which in reality are Hisown He accepts them as if they were ours, and He makes Himself our debtor as though they were not alreadyHis.

8. If we perceive the spiritual principles of visible things we learn that the world has a Maker. But we do not askwhat is the nature of that Maker, because we recognize that this is beyond our scope. Visible creation clearly

enables us to grasp that there is a Maker, but it does not enable us to grasp His nature.

9. The wrath of God is the painful sensation we experience when we are being trained by Him. Through thispainful experience of unsought sufferings God often abases and humbles an intellect conceited about itsknowledge and virtue; for such sufferings make it conscious of itself and its own weakness. When the intellectperceives its own weakness it rejects the vain pretensions of the heart.

10. The wrath of God is the suspension of gifts of grace - a most salutary experience for every self-inflated intellectthat boasts of the blessings bestowed by God as if they were its own achievements.

11. The intellect of every true philosopher and gnostic possesses both Judah and Jerusalem; Judah is practicalphilosophy and Jerusalem is contemplative intuition. Whenever by the grace of God

such an intellect repels the powers of evil with virtue and spiritual knowledge, and wins a complete victory overthem, yet does not thank God, the true author of this victory, but boasts that the achievement is its own, it bringsdown the wrath of God's abandonment not only on itself but also on Judah and Jerusalem (cf. 2 Chr. 32:25), that is,on both its practice of the virtues and its contemplative life; it has failed to 'give thanks to God for the gifts that Hehas given" (ibid.). God at once permits shameful passions to vitiate its practice of the virtues and to sully itsconscience, which until then was pure; He also permits false concepts to insinuate themselves into its contemplationof created beings and to pervert its spiritual knowledge, which until then had been sound. For ignoble passionsimmediately attack an intellect conceited about its virtue, just as an intellect over-elated because of its spiritualknowledge will be permitted by God's just judgment to lapse from true contemplation.

12. Providence has implanted a divine standard or law in created beings, and in accordance with this law when weare ungrateful for spiritual blessings we are schooled in gratitude by adversity, and brought to recognize throughthis experience that all such blessings are produced through the workings of divine power. This is to prevent usfrom becoming irrepressibly conceited, and from thinking m our arrogance that we possess virtue and spiritualknowledge by nature and not by grace. If we did this we would be using what is good to produce what is evil:the very things which should establish knowledge of God unshaken within us will instead be making usignorant of Him.

13. We know that the providence which sustains created beings exists in them as a divine rule and law. Inaccordance with God's justice, when those rich in blessings are ungrateful to Him who bestows them, they areschooled in gratitude by this richness being drastically curtailed; and through this adversity they are led torecognize the true source of the blessings they receive. For when conceit about one's virtue is left undisciplinedit naturally generates arrogance, and this induces a sense of hostility to God.

14. He who thinks that he has achieved perfection in virtue will never go on to seek the original source of blessing,for he has limited the scope of his aspiration to himself and so of his own accord has deprived himself of thecondition of salvation, namely

God. The person aware of his natural poverty where goodness is concerned never relaxes his impetus towards Himwho can fully supply what he lacks.

15. He who has perceived how limitless virtue is never ceases from pursuing it, so as not to be deprived of theorigin and consummation of virtue, namely God, by confining his aspiration to himself. For by wronglysupposing that he had achieved perfection he would forfeit true being, towards which every diligent personstrives.

16. The arrogant intellect is justly made the object of wrath, that is to say, it is abandoned by God, as 1 have alreadydescribed, and the demons are permitted to plague it during contemplation. This happens so that it may becomeaware of its own natural weakness and recognize the grace and divine power which shields it and whichaccomplishes every blessing; and so that it may also learn humility, utterly discarding its alien and unnaturalpride. If this indeed happens, then the other form of wrath - the withdrawal of graces previously given - will notvisit it, because it has already been humbled and is now conscious of Him who provides all blessings.

17. The person who has not been recalled to humility by the first form of wrath, namely abandonment, and does notthrough this humility learn true awareness, inevitably brings on himself the other form of wrath, which depriveshim of the operation of the graces and leaves him destitute of the power that until then had protected him. For '1will take away its protection", says God of an ungrateful Israel, 'and it will be plundered; 1 will break down itswall and it will be trampled under foot; 1 will destroy My vineyard, it will not be pruned or dug, and: briars will

grow in it as in ground that is waste; and I will command the clouds not to rain on it' (Isa. 5:5-6. LXX).

18. Complete unawareness of the loss of the virtues marks the downward path to godlessness. For the person whohabitually disobeys God, through indulging in the pleasures of the flesh, will deny God Himself when theoccasion arises. In preferring the life of the flesh to God, he places a higher value on sensual pleasures than onthe divine will.

19. When we think that our intellect has experienced something we must surely believe that its powers of asceticpractice and of contemplation have also shared m this experience in accordance

with their natural principles,/or a subject cannot experience something without the things within the subject alsosharing in the experience. I call the intellect a subject because it is capable of receiving virtue and spiritualknowledge. By the phrase "within the subject' I refer to the life of ascetic practice and the contemplative life, whichin relation to the intellect are accidents or attributes. Hence they share completely in the experience of the intellect,because it is the intellect's mobility that produces in them any modification which they undergo.

20. Suppose the demons invisibly attack the intellect of a virtuous, God-loving man who, like Hezekiah, has girdedhimself spiritually with power against them, and who through prayer has received an angel sent to him fromGod (cf 2 Chr. 32:21), that is to say, has received one of the higher principles of wisdom, and so scatters anddestroys the whole army of the devil; and suppose this man ascribes this victory and deliverance not to God butentirely to himself, then he has failed to 'give thanks to God for the gifts He has given' (2 Chr. 32:25). Hisgratitude does not match the greatness of his deliverance, nor does his inner attitude measure up to the bounty ofhis deliverer.

21. Let us illumine our intellect with intellections of the divine world and make

our body refulgent with the qualityof the spiritual principles we have perceived, so that through the rejection of the passions it becomes aworkshop of virtue, controlled by the intelligence. If the natural passions of the body are governed by the intelli-gence there is no reason to censure them. But when their activity is not controlled by the intelligence, they do

deserve censure. This is why it is said that such passions must be rejected, for ahhough their activity is natural,they may often be used, when not governed by the inteUigence, in a way that is contrary to nature.

22. Anyone whose heart exuhs because of the divine gifts he has received, and who preens himself as though thosegifts were his own and had not been received (cf. 1 Cor. 4:7), justly calls down wrath on himself. God permitsthe devil to entangle his intellect, to undermine the virtuous quality of his conduct, and to obscure the luminousprinciples of spiritual knowledge during his contemplation. This is to make him realize his own weakness andrecognize the one power capable of defeating the passions in us. If this happens, he may repent and be broughtto a state of humility, discarding his load of conceit

and being reconciled with God. Then he will avert the wrath that falls on those who do not repent, that takes awaythe grace which guards their souls, and leaves their ungrateful mmds destitute.

23. When wrath takes the form of God allowing the demons to attack an arrogant intellect through the passions, it isa means of deliverance. For through suffering these shameful attacks the person that boasts of his virtues isenabled to learn who is the giver of these virtues. Otherwise he will be stripped of those things that are not infact his, though he regarded them, as such, forgetting that he had received them as a gift. :

24. Truly blessed is the intellect that dies to all created beings:

to sensible beings by quelling the activity of the senses, and to intelligible beings by ceasing from noeticactivity. Through such a death of the intellect the will dies to all things. The intellect is then able to receive thelife of divine grace and to apprehend, in a manner that transcends its noetic power, not simply created beings,but their Creator.

25. Blessed is he who has united his practice of the virtues to natural goodness and his contemplative life to naturaltruth. For all practice of the virtues is for the sake of goodness and all contemplation seeks spiritual knowledge

solely for the sake of truth. When goodness and truth are attained, nothing can afflict the soul's capacity forpracticing the virtues, or disturb its contemplative activity with outlandish speculations; for the soul will nowtranscend every created and intelligible reality, and will enter into God Himself, who alone is goodness andtroth and who is beyond all being and all intellection.

26. Goodness, which is the lull expression of divine activity within us, is said to be the consummation of practicalvirtue. The soul's intelligent power is drawn towards goodness when it uses its incensive and desiring aspects inaccordance with nature. In goodness the beauty that is according to God's likeness is made manifest. Theconsummation of contemplative philosophy is said to be the truth. Truth is the simple, undivided knowledge ofall the qualities that appertain to God. A pure intellect is draws towards this knowledge when it has nullified alljudgment based on; the senses. Such knowledge makes manifest the dignity of the divine image in a whollyunsullied state.

27. No one can truly bless God unless he has sanctified his body

with the virtues and made his soul luminous with spiritual knowledge. For a virtuous disposition constitutes the faceof a contemplative intellect, its gaze turned heavenwards to the height of true knowledge.

28. Blessed is he who knows in truth that we are but tools in God's hands; that it is God who effects within us allascetic practice and contemplation, virtue and spiritual knowledge, victory and wisdom, goodness and truth; andthat to all this we contribute nothing at all except a disposition that desires what is good. Zerubbabel had thisdisposition when he said to God: "Blessed art Thou who hast given me, wisdom; I give thanks to Thee, 0 Lordof our fathers; from Thee comes victory and wisdom; and Thine is the glory and I am Thy servant' (1 Esd. 4:59-60). As a truly grateful servant he ascribed all things to God, who had given him everything. He possessedwisdom as a gift from God and attributed to Him as Lord of his fathers the efficacy of the blessings bestowedon him. These blessings are, as we have said, the union of victory and wisdom, virtue and spiritual knowledge.

ascetic practice and contemplation, goodness and truth. For when these are united together they shine with asingle divine glory and brightness.

29. All the achievements of the saints were clearly gifts of grace from God. None of the saints had the least thingother than the goodness granted to him by the Lord God according to the measure of his gratitude and love. Andwhat he acquired he acquired only in so far as he surrendered himself to the Lord who bestowed it,

30. When a man's intellect is pre-eminent in virtue and spiritual knowledge, and he is determined to keep his soulfree from evil slavery to the passions, he says, "Women are extremely strong but truth conquers all' (1 Esd.3:12). By women he means the divinizing virtues which give rise to the love that unites men with God and withone another. This love wrests the soul away from all that is subject to generation and decay and from allintelligible beings that are beyond generation and decay, and - in so far as this can happen to human nature - itintermingles the soul with God Himself in a kind of erotic union, mystically establishing a single shared life,undefiled and divine. By truth he means the sole and unique cause, origin, kingdom, power and glory of createdbeings, from which and through which all things were made and are being made, by which and through whichthe being of all things is sustained.

and to which the lovers of God dedicate all their diligence and activity.

31. Women signit}' the supreme realization of the virtues, which is love. Love is the unfailing pleasure andindivisible union of those who participate through their longing in what is good by nature. Truth signifies thefulfillment of all spiritual knowledge and of all the things that can be known. For the natural activities of allcreated things are drawn by a certain universal intelligence to this truth as their origin and fulfillment. For theOrigin and Cause of created beings has as truth conquered all things naturally, and has drawn their activity toHimself

32. Because it transcends all things, truth admits of no plurality, and reveals itself as single and unique. It embracesthe spiritual potentialities of all that is intellective and intelligible, since it transcends both intellective andintelligible beings; and by an infinite power it encompasses both the ultimate origin and the ultimateconsummation of created beings-and draws the entire activity of each to itself. On some it bestows lucidspiritual knowledge of the grace they have lost, and to others it grants, through an indescribable mode ofperception and by means of participation, clear understanding of the goodness for which they long.

33. The intellect is the organ of wisdom, the intelligence that of spiritual knowledge. The natural sense of assurancecommon to both intellect and intelligence is the organ of the faith established in each of them, while naturalcompassion is the organ of the gift of healing. For, corresponding to every divine gift, there is in us anappropriate and natural organ capable of receiving it - a kind of capacity, or intrinsic state or disposition. Thushe who purges his intellect of all sensible images receives wisdom. He who makes his intelligence the master ofhis innate passions - that is to say, of his incensive and desiring powers - receives spiritual knowledge. Hewhose intellect and intelligence possess an unshakeable assurance concerning divine realities receives that faithwith which all things are possible. He who has acquired natural compassion receives, after the utter annihilationof seh"-love, the gifts of healing.

34. In each of us the energy of the spirit is made manifest according to the measure of his faith (cf. Rom. 12:6).Therefore each of us is the steward of his own grace and, if we think logically, we should never envy anotherperson the

enjoyment of his gifts, since

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the disposition which makes us capable of receiving divine blessings depends on ourselves.

35. In other words, divine blessings are bestowed according to the measure of faith in each man. Similarly, thestrength of our faith is revealed by the zeal with which we act. Thus our actions disclose the measure of ourfaith, and the strength of our faith determines the measure of grace that we receive. Conversely, the extent to

which we fail to act reveals the measure of our lack of faith, and our lack of faith in turn determines the degreeto which we are deprived of grace. Hence the person who out of jealousy envies those who practice the virtuesis more than misguided, for the choice of believing and acting, and of receiving grace according to the measureof his faith, clearly depends on him and not on anybody else.

36. He who aspires to divine realities willingly allows providence to lead him by principles of wisdom towards thegrace of deification. He who does not so aspire is drawn, by the just judgment of God and against his will, awayfrom evil by various forms of discipline. The first, as a lover of God, is deified by providence; the second,although a lover of matter, is held back from perdition by God's judgment. For since God is goodness itself. Heheals those who desire it through the principles of wisdom, and through various forms of discipline cures thosewho are sluggish in virtue.

37. Real faith is truth which is all-embracing, all-sustaining and free from all falsehood. A good conscience conferson us the power of love, since it is not guilty of any transgression of the commandments.

38. Scripture says that seven spirits will rest upon the Lord: the spirit of wisdom,

the spirit of understanding, thespirit of spiritual knowledge, the spirit of cognitive insight, the spirit of counsel, the spirit of strength, and thespirit of the fear of God (cf Isa. 11:2). The effects produced by these spiritual gifts are as follows: by fear,abstention from evil; by strength, the practice of goodness; by counsel, discrimination with respect to thedemons; by cognitive insight, a clear perception of what one has to do; by spiritual knowledge, the activegrasping of the divine principles inherent in the virtues; by understanding, the soul's total empathy with thethings that it has come to know; and by wisdom, an indivisible union with God, whereby the saints attain theactual enjoyment of the things for which they long. He who shares in wisdom becomes god by partici-

pation and, immersed m the ever-flowing, secret outpouring of God's mysteries, he imparts to those who long for ita knowledge of divine blessedness.

39. The spirit of the fear of God is abstention from evil deeds. The spirit of strength is an impulse and dispositionprompt to fulfill the commandments. The spirit of counsel is the habit of discrimination according to which wefulfill the divine commandments intelligently and distinguish what is good from what is bad. The spirit ofcognitive insight is an unerring perception of the ways in which virtue is to be practiced; if we act in accordancewith this perception we will not deviate at all from the true judgment of our intelligence. The spirit of spiritualknowledge is a grasping of the commandments and the principles inherent in them, according to which thequalities of the virtues are constituted. The spirit of understanding is acceptance of the qualities and principlesof the virtues or, to put it more aptly, it is a transmutation by which one's natural powers commingle with thequalities and principles of the commandments. The spirit of wisdom is ascension towards the Cause of thehigher spiritual principles inherent in the commandments, and union with it. Through this ascension and unionwe are initiated, in so far as this is possible for human beings, simply and through unknowing into those innerdivine principles of created beings, and in different ways we present to men, as if from a spring welling up inour heart, the

truth which resides in all things.

40. We ascend step by step from what is remotest from God, but near to us, to the primal realities which are furthestfrom us but near to God. For we begin by abstaining from evil because of fear, and from this we advance to thepractice of virtue through strength; from the practice of virtue we advance to the. discrimination conferred bythe spirit of counsel; from discrimination to a settled state of virtue, which is cognitive insight; from the settledstate of virtue to the spiritual knowledge of the divine principles inherent in the virtues; from this knowledge toa state of understanding, that is, to the transmuted state in which we conform to the divine principles of virtuethat we have come to know; and from this we advance to the simple and undistorted contemplation of the truththat is m all; things. From this point of vantage, as a. result of our wise contemplation of sensible and noeticbeings, we will be enabled to speak about the trath as we should.

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41. The first good which actively affects us, namely fear, is reckoned by Scripture as the most remote from God, forit is called 'the beginning of wisdom' (Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; 9:10). Setting out from this towards our ultimategoal, wisdom, we come to understanding, and this enables us to draw close to God Himself, for we have only

wisdom lying between us and our union with Him. Yet it is impossible for a man to attain wisdom unless first,through fear and through the remaining intermediary gifts, he frees himself completely from the mist ofignorance and the dust of sin. That is why, in the order established by Scripture, wisdom is placed close to Godand fear close to us. In this way we can learn the rule and law of good order.

42. Ascending therefore with these eyes of faith, that is to say, with this enlightenment, we are drawn towards thedivine unity of wisdom, which is divided into different gifts for our benefit; and by mounting from one virtue

toanother we unite with the source of those gifts. But with God's help we do not omit any of the stages we havealready mentioned, lest by gradually growing neglectful we allow our faith to become blind and sightlessbecause it is deprived of the enlightenment of the Spirit that comes through works. If this happened, we wouldbe punished for endless ages because we have blinded m ourselves the divine eyes which had opened within usaccording to the measure of our faith.

43. When by neglecting the commandments a person blinds the eyes of faith that are within him, then he is certainlydoomed, for he no longer has God watching over him. For if Scripture calls the energies of the Spirit the 'eyesof the Lord' (Deut. 11:12), the person who does not open those eyes by fulfilling the commandments does nothave God watching over him. God watches us only when through fulfilling the commandments we areillumined by the energies of the Spirit, for He has no other eyes by which He looks down on those who dwell onearth.

44. Wisdom is a unity contemplated mdivisibly in the various virtues which arise from it; and it is perceived in asingle form in the operations of the virtues. Again, it appears as a simple unity when the virtues which issuedfrom it are reintegrated with it. This happens when we, for whose sake wisdom has produced from itself eachindividual virtue, are drawn upwards towards it by means of each virtue.

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45. When you fail to cany out the divine precepts of faith, your faith is blind. For if the precepts of God are light(cf. Isa. 26:9. LXX), it is clear that when you fail to put the divine precepts into practice you are without divinefight. You are God's servant merely in name, not in reality.

46. No one can plead the weakness of the flesh as an excuse when he sins; for the union of our humanity with thedivine Logos through the incarnation, has renewed the whole of nature by lifting the curse, and so we have noexcuse if our will remains attached to the passions. For the divinity of the Logos, which

always dwells by gracein those who believe in Him, withers the rule of sin in the flesh.

47. He who through faith in God and love for Him has conquered the witless desires or impulses of the passionswhich are contrary to nature, moves out of the sphere of natural law and enters wholly into the noetic realm.And, together with himself, he delivers from alien servitude his fellow-men and their concerns.

48. Unless curbed by the fear of God that accompanies the practice of the virtues, spiritual knowledge leads tovanity; for it encourages the person puffed up by it to regard as his own what has merely been lent to him, andto use his borrowed intelligence to win praise for himself. But when his practice of the virtues increasesconcomitantly with his longing for God, and he does not arrogate to himself more spiritual knowledge than isneeded for the task in hand, then he is made humble, reduced to himself by principles which are beyond hiscapacity.

49. Man's heavenly abode is a dispassionate state of virtue, combined with a spiritual knowledge that has overcomeall delusory notions.

50. Plurality is the consummation of unity manifested, and unity is the origin of non-manifest pluralits'. For theorigin of every consummation is clearly its non-manifest state, and the consummation of every origin is the fulldevelopment of its potentiality for manifestation. Thus, since faith is the natural origin of the virtues, its con-summation is the full development of the goodness realized through the virtues; and since natural goodness isthe consummation of the virtues, its origin is faith. In this way there is an intrinsic reciprocity between faith andgoodness: faith is implicit goodness and goodness is faith manifested. God is by nature both faithful and good(cf

Matt. 19:17); He is faithful as the primal good and good as the desire of all desires. These attributes are in every way

identical with each other; and, except is our conception of them, they are not divided from each other in any way byany act of manifestation that takes its start from Him and ends in Him. Thus plurality, being the manifestation ofGod as the desire of all desires, brings to perfect fulfillment the longmg of all that aspires towards Him; while unity,being a symbol of God as the primal good, constitutes the perfect ground of all that is made manifest from Him.

51. The first type of dispassion is complete abstention from the actual committing of sift, and it may be found inthose beginning the spiritual way. The second is the complete rejection in the mind of all assent to evil thoughts;this is found in those who have achieved an intelligent participation in virtue. The third is the completequiescence of passionate desire; this is found in those who contemplate noetically the inner essences of visiblethings through then outer forms. The fourth type of dispassion is the complete purging even of passion-freeimages; this is found in those who have made their intellect a pure, transparent mirror of God through spiritualknowledge and contemplation. If, then, you have cleansed yourself from the committing of acts prompted bythe passions, have freed yourself from mental assent to them, have put a stop to the stimulation of passionatedesire, and have purged your intellect of even the passion-free images of what were once objects of thepassions, you have attained the four general types of dispassion. You have emerged from the realm of matterand material things, and have entered the sphere of intelligible realities, noetic, tranquil and divine.

52. The first type of dispassion, in other words, is abstention from the body's impulsion towards the actualcommitting of sin. The second is the complete rejection of impassioned thoughts in the soul; through thisrejection the impulsion of the passions mentioned in the first type of dispassion is quelled, since there are nowno impassioned thoughts to incite it to action. The third is the complete quiescence of passionate desire, andthrough this the second type is generated, since it is brought into being by purity of thought. The fourth type ofdispassion is the complete exclusion from the mind of all sensible images. This also produces the third type,since the mind no longer possesses those images of sensible things which produce imaginings of the passions init.

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53. Intelligence and reason are to be treated like the bondservants of Hebrew stock who are set free at the end of sixyears (cf Deut. 15:12). They labor like a servant and a handmaid for everyone who practices the virtues, sincethey conceive and realize the qualities of active virtue, and their whole strength is as it were drawn up against

the demons that oppose the practice of the virtues. When they have completed the stage of practical philosophy- and this completion is represented by the sixth year, for the number six signifies practical philosophy -intelligence and reason are set free to devote themselves to spiritual contemplation, that is to say, theycontemplate the inner essences of created beings.

54. The mcensive power and desire, on the other hand, are to be treated like the servant and the handmaid ofanother tribe (cf. Lev. 25: 41-42). The contemplative; intellect, through fortitude and self-restraint, subjugatesthem for ever to the lordship of the intelligence, so that they serve the virtues. It does not give them theircomplete freedom until the law of nature is totally swallowed up by the law of the spirit, in the same way as thedeath of the unhappy flesh is swallowed up by infinite life (cf. 2 Cor. 5:4), and until the entire image of theunoriginate kingdom is clearly revealed, mnnetically manifesting in itself the entire form of the archetype.When the contemplative intellect enter this state it gives the incensive power and desire their freedom,transmuting desire into the unsullied pleasure and pure enravishment of an intense love for God and theincensive power into spiritual fervor, an ever-active fiery elan, a self-possessed frenzy.

55. The intellect unwavering concentration on spiritual knowT-edge, and the incorruption of the senses whenhallowed by virtue, constitute an image of the unoriginate kingdom. This occurs when soul and body, throughthe spiritual transmutation of the senses into the intellect, are united with each other solely by the divine law ofthe Spirit. In this state, the ever-active vital energy of the Logos always pervades them, and all unlikeness to thedivine utterly vanishes.

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56. Pleasure has been defined as desire realized, since pleasure presupposes the actual presence of somethingregarded as good. Desire, on the other hand, is pleasure that is only potential, since desire seeks tike realizationin the future of something regarded as good. Incensiveness is frenzy premeditated, and frenzy is incensivenessbrought into action. Thus he who has subjected desire and incensiveness to the intelligence will find that hisdesire is changed into pleasure through his soul's unsullied union in grace with the divine, and that hisincensiveness is changed into a pure fervor shielding his pleasure in the divine, and into a self-possessed frenzyin which the soul, ravished by longing, is totally rapt in ecstasy above the realm of created beings. But-so longas the world and the soul's willing attachment to material things are alive in us, we must not give freedom to

desire and incensiveness, lest they commingle with the sensible objects that are cognate to them, and make waragainst the soul, taking it captive with the passions, as in ancient times the Babylonians took Jerusalem (cf. 2Kgs. 25:4). For when Scripture, exhibiting the world of mtelligibles through the literal narrative, speaks of anage during which the Law commands servants of another tribe to remain in bondage (cf. Lev. 25:40-41), itmeans by "age" the attachment of the soul's will and purpose to this world, that is, to this present life.

57 Evil has a beginning, for it has its origin in activity on our part which is contrary to nature. But goodnessdoes not have a beginning, for it exists by nature before time and before all ages. Goodness is intelligiblebecause it can be grasped by intellection. Evil is not intelligible because it cannot be grasped-by intellection.Goodness can he spoken about - indeed, it is the only thing we should speak about. It also comes into being - itis, in fact, the only thing that should come into being; for although by nature it is uncreated, yet because ofGod's love for us it allows itself to come into being through us by grace, so that we who create and speak maybe deified. Evil - which is the only thing that should not come into being - we cannot create. Evil is corruptiblebecause corruption is the nature of evil, which does not possess any true existence whatsoever. Goodness isincorruptible because it exists eternally and never ceases to be, and watches over everything in which it dwells.Goodness, then, is what we should seek with our intelligence, long for with our desire, and keep inviolate

withour mcensive power.

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With out cognitive insight we should prevent it from being adulterated by anything that is contrary to it. With ourvoice we should make it manifest in speech to those who art ignorant of it. And with our generative power weshould make it increase or, to put it more accurately, we should be increased by it.

58. The contemplative intellect, if it is to rule over conceptual images of created things, as well as over its ownactivities, must be in a state barren of evil, that is, one which neither conceives evil in any way nor gives birth toit. It must be in this state when it embarks on contemplation lest, in scrutinizing created beings spiritually, itinadvertently falls into the power of one of the demons whose nature it is to comipt the heart's pure vision bymeans of some sensible object.

59. He who on account of his virtue or spiritual knowledge falls victim to self-esteem grows his hair like Absalom,to no good purpose (cf. 2 Sam. 14:26; 18:9). Outwardly he appears to pursue a moral way of life, but it iscarefully contrived and mixed (like a mule) with conceit, and designed to deceive onlookers. Puffed up with hisvainglory, he tries to supplant the spiritual father who gave him birth through the teaching of the Logos; for inhis pride he wants, like a usurper, to arrogate to himself all the splendor of-the virtue and spiritual knowledgewhich his spiritual father possessed as a gift from God. But when such a man begins to engage in the spiritualcontemplation of created beings and to fight with his intelligence for truth, because his sensual nature is still fullof life he is caught by his hair in the oak tree of material appearances; and thus his empty conceit, entangled asit is with death, suspends him between heaven and earth (cf. 2 Sam. 18:9). For the victim of self-esteem doesnot possess spiritual knowledge, which like heaven would draw him up out of his degrading conceit, nor doeshe possess earth, that basis, rooted m humility, of practical endeavor which would draw him down from theheights to which his arrogance has raised him. The spiritual teacher who gave him birth grievescompassionately on seeing him the (cf 2 Sam. 18:33). In this way his teacher imitates God, who desires not thedeath of a smner

but rather that he should repent and live (cf. Ezek. 33:11).

60. The origin and consummation of every man's salvation is wisdom, which initially produces fear but whenperfected gives rise to loving desire. Or, rather, initially and providentially wisdom

manifests itself for our sake as fear, so as to make us who aspire to wisdom desist from evil; but ultimately it existsin its natural state for its own sake as loving desire, so as to fill with spiritual mirth those who have abandoned allexistmg things In order to dwell with it.

61. To those who do not long for it, wisdom is fear, because of the loss which they suffer through their flight fromit; but in those who cleave to it, wisdom is loving desire, promoting an inner state of joyous activity. Forwisdom creates fear, delivering a person from the passions by making him apprehensive of punishment; and italso produces loving desire, accustoming the intellect through the acquisition of the virtues to behold theblessings held in store for us.

62. Every genuine confession humbles the souL When it takes the form of thanksgiving, it teaches the soul that ithas been delivered by the grace of God. When it takes the form of self-accusation, it teaches the soul that it isguilty of crimes through its own deliberate indolence.

63. Confession takes two forms. According to the one, we give thanks for blessings received; according to theother, we bring to light and examine what we have done wrong. We use the term confession both for thegrateful appreciation of the blessings we have received through divine favor, and for the admission of the evilactions of which we are guilty. Both forms produce humility. For he who thanks God for blessmgs and he whoexamines himself for his offences are both humbled. The first judges himself unworthy of what he has beengiven: the second implores forgiveness for his sins.

64. The passion of pride arises from two kinds of ignorance, and when these two kinds of ignorance unite togetherthey form a single confused state of mind. For a man is proud only if he is ignorant both of divine help and ofhuman weakness. Therefore pride is a lack of knowledge both in the divine and in the human spheres. For thedenial of two true premises results in a single false affirmation.

65. Self-esteem is the replacing of a purpose which accords with God by another purpose which is contrary to thedivine. For a man full of self-esteem pursues virtue not for God's glory but for his own, and so purchases withhis labors the worthless praise of men.

66. The person who likes to be popular attends solely to the outward show of morality and to the wards of theflatterer. With the first he hopes to attract the eyes and with the second the ears of those

Who are charmed and impressed only by what is visible and audible, and who judge virtue only with their senses.Hence the desire to be popular may be described as an outward display of moral acts and language, as though for thesake of virtue but really is to impress other people.

67. Hypocrisy is the pretence of friendship, or hatred hidden in the form of friendship, or enmity-operating underthe guise, of affection, or envy simulating the. character of love, or a style of life adorned with the fiction butnot the reality of virtue, or the pretence of righteousness maintained only in external appearance, or deceit withthe outer form of truth. Hypocrisy is the trade of those who emulate the serpent in their twistmgs and tvvmmgs.

68. God is the cause of created beings and of their inherent goodness. Thus he who is puffed up with his virtue andknowledge, and whose grace-given progress in virtue is not matched by a corresponding recognition of his ownweakness, falls inevitably into the sin of pride. He who seeks goodness for the sake of his own reputationprefers himself to God, for he has been pierced by the nail of self-

esteem. By doing or speaking what is virtuousin order to be seen by men, he sets a much higher value on the approbation of men than on that of God. In short,he is a victim of the desire to be popular. And he who immorally makes use of morality solely to deceive by hissolemn display of virtue, and hides the evil disposition of his will under the outward form of piety, bartersvirtue for the guile of hypocrisy. He aims at something other than die cause of all things.

69. The demons of pride, self-esteem, desire for popularity, and hypocrisy, never act by trying to dampen the ardorof the virtuous man. Instead, they cunningly reproach him for his shortcomings where the virtues are concerned,and suggest that he intensifies his

efforts, encouraging him m his struggle; They do this in order to entice him to give his full attention to them: inthis way they make him lose a proper balance and moderation, and lead him imperceptibly to a destination otherthan the one to which he thought he was going.

70. Neither do these demons hate self-restraint, fasting, almsgiving, hospitality, the singing of psalms, spiritualreading, stillness, the most sublime doctrines, sleeping on the ground, vigils, or any of the other things whichcharacterize a life lived according to God,

so long as the aim and purpose of a person trying to live such a life are tilted in their direction.

71. A person pursuing the spiritual way is perhaps quicker to recognize the other demons, and so he more easilyescapes the harm that they do, but in the case of the demons that appear to cooperate with the progress of virtueand pretend they want to help in building a temple to the Lord, surely no intellect is so sublime as to recognizethem without the assistance of the active and living Logos who pervades all thmgs and pierces 'even to thedividing asunder of soul and spirit' (Heb. 4:12) - who discerns, in other words, which acts or conceptual

imagespertain to the soul, that is, are natural forms or expressions of virtue, and which are spiritual, that is, aresupranatural and characteristic of God, but bestowed on nature by grace. It is only the Logos who knowswhether 'the joints and marrow", that is, the qualities of virtue and spiritual principles, have been unitedharmoniously or not, and who judges the intentions and thoughts of the heart (ibid.), that is, judges from what issaid the invisible underlying disposition and the motives hidden in -the soul. For to Him nothing in us is unseen:however we think we may escape notice, to Him "all things are naked and open' (Heb. 4:13), not only what wedo or think, but even what we will do or will think.

72. By 'dividing asunder of soul and spirit' is meant distinguishing between innate virtues, the principles of whichwe possess by nature, and virtues which are from the Spirit, the grace of which we receive as a free gift. TheLogos discriminates with exactness between the two.

73. The intentions and thoughts which the Logos discerns are the soul's relationships with divine principles andthoughts, and the causes of these relationships. For an intention moves the mind, which has such a relationship;and a thought is directed towards a specific end, which in this way acts as a cause.

74. If God is essential knowledge, then God is subordinate to the intellect, for clearly the intellect is prior to allknowledge that it embraces. Therefore God is beyond knowledge because He is infinitely beyond everyintellect, whatever the knowledge it embraces.

75. What man without the divine Logos dwelling in the depths of his heart can overcome the invisible wiles of thedissembling

demons? How can he on his own, keeping himself free of all con- course with them, found and build the temple ofthe Lord, like Zerubbabel and Joshua and the heads of the clans, who expressly announced to the deceitful spirits ofpride, self-

esteem, desire for popularity and hypocrisy: 'You cannot share with us in the building of the house for theLord our God; we alone will build for the Lord of Israel' (1 Esd. 5:70-71)? For concourse with the demons bringsabout the decay and destruction of the whole building, and strips the grace of beauty from divine offerings.

76. Nobody who accepts, as partners in his struggle for virtue, any of the four demons we have mentioned can buildfor the Lord. If he does accept any of them, as a result of his efforts he will not find God, but will be confirmedin the passion that he consolidates through his virtue.

77. The demons that wage war on us through our shortcomings in virtue are those that teach unchastity,drunkenness, avarice and envy. Those that wage war on us through our excessive zeal for virtue teach conceit,self-esteem and pride; they secretly pervert what is commendable into what is reprehensible.

78. When the demons attack us invisibly in the guise of spiritual friendship, pretending that they want toaccomplish the death of sin by means which m themselves are good, and when they say, "Let us build with youthe temple of your Lord', would that we might always reply, "You cannot share with us in the building of thehouse for the Lord our God; we alone will build for the Lord of Israel' (1 Esd. 5:70-71). 'We alone' because,having been freed from the spirits that fight against us through our shortcomings m virtue, and having escapedfrom them, we do not now want to be pierced by those that excite our pride by encouraging us to excessiveZeal; because if that happened our fall would be far worse than if we had fallen on account of our shortcomings.For had we fallen for this latter reason, there would have been a good chance of recovering, since we would beforgiven because of our weakness. But recovery is impossible, or at least difficult, if we fall because we havemade ourselves hateful through our pride, and in place of what is right have set up something else which weregard as better. Yet m another sense we are not building the temple alone because we have the holy angels tohelp us to do what is good; indeed, we even have God Himself, who reveals Himself to us through our works of

righteousness said builds us as a holy temple, fit for Himself and free from every passion.

79. Virtue may be defined as the conscious union of human weakness with divine strength. Thus the person whomakes no effort to transcend the weakness of human nature has not yet attained the state of virtue. And that iswhy he goes astray, because he has not yet received the power which makes what is weak strong. On the otherhand, he who willfully relies on his own weakness instead of on divine power, regarding this weakness asstrength, has completely overshot the bounds of virtue. And that is why he goes astray, because he is unawarethat he has left goodness behind; indeed, he mistakes his error itself for virtue. Thus the person who makes noeffort to transcend the limits of his natural weakness is more easily forgiven, because indolence is the mainreason for his lapse. But he who relies on his own weakness instead of on divine strength in-order to do what isright, is likely to have lapsed because of willfulness.

80. When it is said that "the just man's prayer, made active, has great strength' (Jas. 5:16), I understand such prayerto be made active in two ways. The first is when the person who offers prayer to God supports it with worksperformed in accordance with the commandments. When he does this his prayer is not merely a matter of wordsand of the hollow sound of the tongue, and therefore ineffectual and without real substance, but it is effectualand living, animated with the actual fulfilling of the commandments. For prayer and supplication are given realsubstance when the commandments are fulfilled through the practice of the virtues. That is why the just man'sprayer is strong and has the power to do all things, for it has been made active in this manner. The second wayin which a Just man's prayer is made active is when another person asks for his prayers and then actually carriesout in practice those things for which he requested the just man to pray; for in such a case this other person "notonly corrects his former mode of life but also, through his turn for the better, fills the just man's prayer withdynamic strength.

81. No benefit comes from a just man's prayer if he who asks for it finds more pleasure in sin than in virtue. ForSamuel mourned over Saul when he sinned, but he was not able to obtain God's mercy, for his grief was notsupported by the necessary change of

life on the part of the sinner. Hence God put an end to the pointless grief of His servant, saying to him, "How longwill you mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him from reigning over Israel?' (1 Sam. 16:1).

82. Again, when the compassionate Jeremiah appealed to God on behalf of the Jewish people because in theirmadness they deludedly worshipped the demons, his prayer was not heard; for it was not supported by theactual conversion of the godless Jews from their errors. Hence God also made him desist from his profitlessprayer, saying:' Do not pray for this people, do not ask for them to be shown mercy, and do not approach Mewith farther intercessions on their account, for I will not hear you' (Jer. 7:16. LXX).

83. It is indeed the height of folly, not to say of madness, for a person who deliberately takes pleasure in destructivesins to seek salvation through the prayers of the just and to ask them to obtain forgiveness for what he activelyglories in, denied as he is by his own free choice. If he really hates what is evil, he should not ask for theprayers of a just man and then allow them to become void and ineffectual: but he should make them active andstrong, so that winged with his own virtues they may reach Him who has power to grant forgiveness for sins.

84. The prayer of a just man has great strength when it is made active either by the just man who offers it or by theperson who asks the just man to offer it for him. When it is made active by the just man, his prayer gives himdirect communion with God who has the power, to grant what he asks. When the prayer is made active by theperson who has asked the just man to pray for him, it delivers him from his evil ways and disposes him tovirtue.

85. St Peter says, 'In which you rejoice, even though for a short while you may have to suffer 'distress from varioustrials' (1 Pet. 1:6). But how can a person in distress because of such trials rejoice in what distresses him?

86. There are two kinds of distress. The first is produced imperceptibly in the soul, the second palpably to-thesenses. The first embraces the fall depth of the soul, tormenting it with the lash of conscience; the secondpervades all the senses when their natural tendency to turn towards external things is checked by pain. The firstkind is the result of sensual pleasure, the second of the soul's felicity. Or rather, the first results from senseexperiences that we

deliberately embrace, the second from those we suffer against our will.

87. Distress, in my opinion, is a state devoid of pleasure. Absence of pleasure means the presence of pain. Pain isclearly a defect in, or a withdrawal of, some natural condition. A defect in some natural condition is a disorderor passion in the faculty that functions naturally in that condition. Such a disorder involves the misuse of thenatural function of that faculty in question. To misuse the natural function is to direct the faculty towards whatdoes not exist by nature and lacks substantial being.

88. The soul's distress is the result of sensual pleasure. For it is sensual pleasure that produces distress of soul.Similarly, distress in the flesh is the result of the soul's pleasure. For the soul's felicity is the flesh's distress.

89. There are two kinds of distress. The first involves the senses and consists in the absence of bodily pleasures: thesecond involves the intellect and consists in the absence of the soul's blessings. Trials, or temptations, arelikewise of two kinds, the first subject to our will and the second not subject to our will. Those subject to ourwill beget bodily pleasure in the senses but distress in the soul. For sin when committed produces distress ofsoul. Those that are not subject to our will become apparent in sufferings undergone unwillingly; they begetpleasure in the soul but distress in the senses.

90. Just as there are two kinds of distress, as 1 have already explained, so also there are two kinds of trial ortemptation, the one willingly accepted and the other

contrary to our wishes. The first produces intendedpleasure; the second inflicts unintended pain. For temptation willingly accepted leads to pleasures clearlyintended by deliberate choice. But a trial undergone contrary to our wishes produces sufferings which areobviously not intended by deliberate choice. The first produces distress in the soul, the second in the senses.

91. Temptation willingly accepted creates distress in the soul, but clearly produces pleasure in the senses. A trialundergone contrary to our wishes produces pleasure in the soul but distress in the flesh.

92. 1 think that when our Lord and God was teaching His disciples how to pray and said, 'Lead us not intotemptation' (Matt. 6:13), He was teaching them to pray that they should reject the kind of temptation which .weaccept willingly, that is, to pray that

they should not be abandoned to the experience of temptations which, when wilhngly accepted, lead to intendedpleasures. But I think that when St James, called the brother of the Lord, was teaching those struggling for truth notto be afraid, and said, "My brethren, regard it as a great joy when various trials befall you' (Jas. 1:2), he wasspeaking with reference to the kind of trial which is not subject to our will, that is, to trials which are contrary to ourwishes and produce suffering. That both these interpretations are correct is clear from the fact that the Lord at onceadds, "But deliver us from the evil one", and that James continues: "Knowing that the testing of your faith producespatient endurance, and let this endurance come to truition, so that you may be perfect and entire, lacking nothing'(Jas. 1:3-4).

93. The Lord teaches us to pray that we may reject temptations subject to our will because these produce pleasure inthe flesh and pain in the soul. St James urges us to rejoice in trials contrary to our wishes because these banishpleasure from the flesh and pain from the soul.

94. A perfect man is one who by means of self-control fights against temptations subject to his will, and whoendures with patience trials that are contrary to his wishes. And an entire man is one whose practice of thevirtues is completed by spiritual knowledge, and whose contemplation does not remain without practical effect.

95. Since distress and pleasure each affect both the soul and the senses, he who cultivates the soul's pleasure andpatiently accepts the distress of the senses becomes tested, perfect and entire. He is tested by experiencing thecontrasting effects of pleasure and distress in the senses. He becomes perfect because he fights unremittinglyagainst pleasure and distress in the senses with self-control and patience. He becomes entire because, throughconstant obedience to the intelligence, he maintains the conditions that combat the mutually conflictingexperiences of pleasure and distress in the senses. By these conditions I mean the practice of the virtues andcontemplation, which he holds together without allowing the one to be in the least disjoined from the other: hisactions manifest his contemplative knowledge and his-contemplation is protected equally by the intelligenceand by the practice of the virtues.

96. He who has had experience of the distress and pleasure of the

flesh may be described as tested because he has experienced both the pleasant and the unpleasant aspects of theflesh. A perfect man is one who with the power of his intelligence has struggled against the pleasure and pam of theflesh and has overcome them. An entire man is one who keeps both his practice of the virtues and his contemplativelife unvarying through the intensity of his longing for God.

97. Distress of soul is of two kinds. The first is distress for one's own sins: the second is distress for the sins ofothers. The cause of such distress is clearly the sensual pleasure either of the man who feels distress or of thoseabout whom he is distressed. For strictly speaking there is scarcely ever any sin in man that is not first generatedby the soul's witless attachment to the senses for the sake of

pleasure. And the cause of pleasure in a man's soulis obviously the distress which he feels in his senses when he delights and rejoices in his own virtues or in thoseof others. For again strictly speaking there is scarcely any virtue in man unless it is first generated by the soul'sdeliberate detachment from the senses.

98. When the soul is free of all impassioned attachment to the senses, there is no sin whatsoever in man. Moreover,all distress of soul is preceded by pleasure in the flesh.

99. The true origin of virtue lies in the soul's voluntary estrangement from the flesh. And the person who subduesthe flesh with voluntary sufferings imbues his soul with spiritual delight.

100. When the soul has achieved detachment from the senses for the sake of virtue, the senses will of necessitysuffer, for the soul's capacity for devising pleasure will no longer be conjoined with them in a deliberatelychosen relationship. On the contrary, the soul will now bravely repulse the assaults of natural sensual pleasurewith self-control; through patient endurance it will implacably resist the attacks of unnatural and involuntarysuffering; it will not abandon the godlike dignity and glory of virtue for pleasure which has no real substance;and it will not fall from the heights of virtue in order to spare the flesh by relieving it of the sufferings inducedby the pain of the senses. For the cause of distress in the senses is the soul's complete concentration on whataccords with nature; and the pleasure of the senses is clearly supported by whatever activity of the soul iscontrary to nature, for such pleasure can have no principle of existence other than the soul's rejection of whataccords with nature.

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1. The soul has an intellectual capacity that is purposeful and inventive. When this capacity is separated from itsattachment to the senses, it no longer seeks to satisfy the longing of the flesh for pleasure, as it did previouslyby virtue of their deliberately chosen relationship. Since its entire attention and intention are now fixed ondivine realities, it refuses to assuage the flesh's suffering.

2. The natural energies of the intellect and those of the senses are opposed to one another because of the extremedissimilarity between their objects. The intellect has as its object noetic and incorporeal beings, whose essenceit is by nature fitted to apprehend: the senses have as object sensible and corporeal entities, which they likewiseapprehend by virtue of their natural powers.

3. The origin of sensual pleasure lies in the soul's rejection of what accords with nature. For when the soul devotesits whole strength to the realization of blessings which accord with nature, it has no capacity for seeking outsensual pleasure.

4. When the intelligence takes precedence over the senses in the contemplation of visible things, the flesh isdeprived of all natural pleasures, because the senses are then kept under control by the intelligence and so arenot free to pursue their own pleasures. Once the intelligence is dominant in us, the flesh necessarily suffers, be-cause the intelligence compels it into the service of virtue.

5. When the intellect regards the senses as its own natural power, it becomes entangled in the superficial aspects ofsensible things and devises ways of enjoying the pleasures of the flesh. It is unable to transcend the nature ofvisible things because it is held back by its impassioned attachment to the senses.

6. It can sometimes happen that the intellect is unable to advance to the apprehension of the noetic realities akin toit except by

way of the contemplation of the intervening sensible objects. But such contemplation is impossible without thesenses, which are linked to the intellect, yet are naturally akin to sensible objects. As a result the intellect, onencountering the superficial aspects of visible things, may well become entangled with them, thinking that the sense-perception linked with it is its own natural activity. If this occurs, the intellect will fall away from the noetic realitieswhich accord with its nature and will grasp with both hands, so to speak, the corporeal entities which

are contrary toits intelligence; and, because of the victory which the senses have gained over it, the intellect will fill the soul withdistress. For it will be seared by the whips of conscience because it has become the author of sensual pleasure andcoarsened itself with thoughts of how to pamper the flesh. But if on the other hand the intellect cuts through thesuperficial aspects of visible things as soon as they strike the senses, it will contemplate the spiritual essences ofcreated things stripped of their outer forms. Then it will produce pleasure in the soul, because the soul will not bedominated by any of the sensible objects which are contemplated; but in the senses it will produce distress, becausethey will be deprived of every natural sensible object.

Sense-pleasure produces distress or suffering in the soul - the two terms mean the same. The soul's pleasure, onthe other hand, produces distress or suffering in the senses. Thus he who longs in hope for life in our Lord andSavior Jesus Christ, through the resurrection of the dead 'to an inheritance which is incorruptible, pure andunfading, kept in heaven" (1 Pet. 1:4), will exult and feel unutterable joy in his soul, for he will be unceasinglyfull of gladness because of his hope for the blessings held in store; but in his flesh and senses he will experiencedistress, that is to say, the suffering produced by various trials and temptations, and the pain which goes withthem. For pleasure and suffering accompany every virtue - suffering in the flesh when it is deprived of itsagreeable lubncious sensuality, and pleasure in the soul, as it delights in spiritual essences stripped ofeverything sensible.

In this present life - for that is what 1 take 'this present time' to mean - the intellect must feel distress withrespect to the flesh, because of the many sufferings resulting from the trials and temptations that beset it in itsstruggle for virtue; but it must always rejoice with respect to the soul, and delight in the hope of eternal

blessings, even though its senses are burdened with suffering. For 'the sufferings of this present time are not worthyto be compared with the glory which shall be

revealed in us" (Rom. 8:18), says St Paul.

9. The flesh belongs to the soul, but the soul does not belong to the flesh. For the lesser belongs to the greater, notthe greater to the lesser. But the law of sin - which is sensual pleasure - has become interlaced with the fleshthrough the fall. Because of this the flesh has been condemned to suffer death, for the purpose of death is todestroy the law of the flesh. Hence the man who knows that because of sin death was introduced, in order todestroy sin, always rejoices in his soul when he sees that, as a result of his many sufferings, the law of sin iswithdrawing from his flesh, thus preparing him to receive in the spirit the blessed life that is held in store. Forunless in this present life the law of sin, evidenced in the will's attachment to the flesh, is drained from the fleshas though from some vessel, no one can receive that blessed life.

10. He who is full of distress with respect to his flesh because of the sufferings he endures for the sake of virtue,rejoices in his soul because of that very virtue: for he beholds as a present reality the beauty of the blessingsheld in store. For the sake of virtue he severs his will from the flesh, and so dies daily, like David (cf Ps.44:22). At the same time, he is continually renewed through his soul's spiritual regeneration; for he possessesboth salutary pleasure and profitable distress. By this distress I do not mean that witless distress felt by mostpeople, which torments their soul because, after developing unnatural impulses towards what it should rejectand an aversion for what it should not reject, it then finds itself bereft of passions and material things. On thecontrary, I have in mind the distress which is purposive and approved by those endowed with divine wisdom,and which indicates the presence of something evil. For distress is defined as evil present: and it is produced inthe soul when sensual pleasure predominates over intelligent discrimination. But it is produced in the senseswhen the soul pursues the path of virtue unhindered; indeed, it induces as much suffering in the senses as itcreates pleasure and joy in the soul that is brought near to God through the illumination conferred upon it byvirtue and spiritual knowledge.

11. Salutary pleasure is the soul's joy on account of virtue.

while profitable distress is the pain the flesh suffers for the sake of virtue. Moreover, he who has given himself up topassions and material things generates impulses towards what he should not desire: while he who does not welcomethe calamities that deprive him of passions and material things creates an aversion for what he should desire.

12. Divine grace cannot actualize the illumination of spiritual knowledge unless there is a natural faculty capable ofreceiving the illumination. But that faculty itself cannot actualize the illumination without the grace which Godbestows.

13. Not even the grace of the Holy Spirit can actualize wisdom in the saints unless there is an intellect capable ofreceiving it: or spiritual knowledge unless there is a faculty of intelligence that can receive it: or faith unlessthere is in the intellect and the intelligence full assurance about the realities to be disclosed hereafter and untilthen hidden from everyone: or gifts of healing unless there is natural compassion: or any other gift of gracewithout the disposition and faculty capable of receiving it. On the other hand, a man cannot acquire a single oneof these gifts with his natural faculties unless aided by the divine power that bestows them. All the saints showthat God's grace does not suspend man's natural powers: for, after receiving revelations of divine realities, theyinquired into the spiritual principles contained in what had been revealed to them.

14. If a person asks without passion, he will receive the grace to enable him to practice the virtues. And if he seekswith dispassion, he will through natural contemplation find the truth inherent in created beings. And if hedispassionately knocks on the door of spiritual knowledge, he will without hindrance attain the hidden grace ofmystical theology (cf Matt. 7:7-8).

15. He who dispassionately seeks for what is divine will certainly receive what he seeks. He who seeks with anypassion will fail to find what he seeks. For Scripture says, 'You ask, and do not receive, because you ask.wrongly' (Jas. 4:3).

16. The Holy Spirit within us searches out the spiritual knowledge of created beings. But He does not search it outfor Himself, because He is God and beyond all knowledge: on the contrary. He searches it out for our sakes,who are in need of such knowledge. Similarly the Logos, when He accomplished His mystery

through the flesh,became flesh not for Himself but for us. Yet just as the Logos,

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as befits God, did not actualize what naturally pertains to the flesh without assuming flesh endowed with soul andintellect, so the Holy Spirit does not actualize in the saints a spiritual knowledge of the mysteries apart from thatfaculty in them which naturally searches out such knowledge.

17. Just as it is impossible for the eye to perceive sensible objects without the light of the sun, so the humanintellect cannot engage in spiritual contemplation without the light of the Spirit. For physical light naturallyilluminates the senses so that they may perceive physical bodies; while spiritual light illumines the intellect sothat it can engage in contemplation and thus grasp what lies beyond the senses.

18. The faculties which search out divine realities were implanted by the Creator in the essence of human nature atits very entrance into being; but divine realities themselves are revealed to man through grace by the power ofthe Holy Spirit descending upon him. When, as a result of the fall, the devil had riveted the attention of thesefaculties to visible things, nobody understood or sought out God, because in all who participated in humannature intellect and intelligence were confined to the superficial aspects of sensible things, and so they acquiredno understanding of what lies beyond the senses. But then, in those who had not of their own free will becomeinwardly subject to deceit, the grace of the Holy Spirit broke the attachment of these faculties to material thingsand restored them to their original state. On receiving them back thus purified, men again sought out divinerealities, and they have continued to search them out through the same grace of the Holy Spirit.

19. The soul's salvation is the consummation of faith (cf 1 Pet. 1:9). This consummation is the revelation of whathas been believed. Revelation is the inexpressible interpenetration of the believer with the object of belief andtakes place according to each believer's degree of faith (cf. Rom. 12:6). Through that

interpenetration thebeliever finally returns to his origin. This return is the fulfillment of desire. Fulfillment of desire is ever-activerepose in the object of desire. Such repose is eternal uninterrupted enjoyment of this object. Enjoyment of thiskind entails participation in supra-natural divine realities. This participation consists in the participant becominglike that in which he participates. Such likeness involves.

so far as this is possible, an identity with respect to energy between the participant and that in which he participatesby virtue of the hkeness. This identity with respect to energy constitutes the deification of the saints. Deification,briefly, is the encompassing and fulfillment of all times and ages, and of all that exists in either. This encompassingand fulfillment is the union, in the person granted salvation, of his real authentic origin with his real authentic con-summation. This union presupposes a transcending of all that by nature is essentially limited by an origin and aconsummation. Such transcendence is effected by the almighty and more than powerful energy of God, acting in adirect and infinite manner in the person found worthy of this transcendence. The action of this divine energybestows a more than ineffable pleasure and joy on him in whom the unutterable and unfathomable union with thedivine is accomplished. This, in the nature of things, cannot be perceived, conceived or expressed.

20. Nature does not contain the inner principles of what is beyond nature any more than it contains the laws of whatis contrary to nature. By what is beyond nature I mean the divine and inconceivable pleasure which Godnaturally produces in those found worthy of being united with Him through grace. By what is contrary to natureI mean the indescribable pain brought about by the privation of such pleasure. This pain God naturally producesin the unworthy when He is united to them in a manner contrary to grace. For God is united with all menaccording to the underlying quality of their inner state: and, at the creation of each person. He provides eachperson with the capacity to perceive and sense Him when He is united in one way or another with all men at theend

of the ages.

21. The Holy Spirit leads those who seek the spiritual principles and qualities of salvation to an understanding ofthem: for He does not allow the power with which they naturally seek divine things to remain inactive andunproductive in them.

22. First a man seeks to make his will dead to sin and sin dead to his will, and to this end he investigates how andby what means he should make these two dead to one another. When that has been done, he seeks to make hiswill alive in virtue and virtue alive in his will: and to this end he investigates how and by what means he shouldvivify each in the other. To seek is to have an appetite for

some object of desire; to investigate is to employ effective means by which the appetite can attain that object.

23. He who is to be saved must make not only sin dead to his will but also his will dead to sin. He must resurrectnot only his will by means of virtue but also virtue by means of his will. In this way the will, being put to deathand entirely disjoined from the totality of sin, which likewise has been put to death, becomes impervious to sin,while as revivified it becomes wholly conscious, through its unbroken union with it, of the totality of virtue,which itself has been revivified. For he who has made his will dead to sin has been united with the likeness ofthe death of Christ; and he who has given his will new life through righteousness has also become one with Hisresurrection (cf Rom. 6:5j.

24. When sin and will become dead to each other they become mutually impervious to each other; and whenrighteousness and will have life in each other they become mutually conscious of each other.

25. Christ is by nature both God and man. In an ineffable and supernatural manner we participate by grace in Himas God, while He in His

incomprehensible love for men shares as man in our lot for our sake by makingHimself one with us with a form like ours. The saints foresaw Him mystically in the Spirit and were taught thatthe glory to be revealed in Christ in the future because of His virtue must be preceded by the sufferings whichHe would endure for the sake of virtue (cf. 1 Pet. 1:11).

26. When the intellect in its longing is drawn in a manner beyond its understanding towards the source of createdbeings, it simply seeks; when the intelligence explores in various ways the true essences in created beings, itinvestigates.

27. Seeking is the intellect's first, simple, fervent movement towards its own cause. Investigating is theintelligence's first, simple discernment of its own cause with the help of some concept. Again, seeking occurswhen the intellect, spurred on by intense longing, moves spiritually, and in cognitive awareness, towards itsown cause. Investigating occurs when the intelligence, through the operation of the virtues, discerns its owncause with the help of some wise and profound concept.

28. While the holy and divine prophets were seeking out and investigating all that is connected with the salvation ofsouls, the

movement of their intellects towards God was spurred on by their longing and kept fervent with cognitive insightand spiritual knowledge; and the discriminative power of their intelligence, in its active discernment of divinerealities, was full of understanding and wisdom. Those who imitate them will also seek the salvation of souls withcognitive insight and spiritual knowledge: and by investigating with understanding and wisdom they will be able todiscern the works of God.

29. The intelligence recognizes two kinds of knowledge of divine realities. The first is relative, because it isconfined to the intelligence and its intellections, and does not entail any real perception, through actualexperience, of what is known.

In our present life we are governed by this kind of knowledge. The second is trueand authentic knowledge. Through experience alone and through grace it brings about, by means ofparticipation and without the help of the intelligence and its intellections, a total and active perception of what isknown. It is through this second kind of knowledge that, when we come into our inheritance, we receivesupernatural and ever-activated deification. The relative knowledge that resides in the intelligence and itsintellections is said to stimulate our longing for the real knowledge attained by participation. This realknowledge, which through experience and participation brings about a perception of what is known, supersedesthe knowledge that resides in the intelligence and the intellections.

30. Knowledge, that is to say, is of two kinds. The first resides in the intelligence and its divine intellections, anddoes not include, in terms of actual vision, a perception of what is known. The second consists solely in theactual enjoyment of divine realities through direct vision, without the help of the intelligence and its intellec-tions. But the intelligence is capable of giving us an intimation of what can be known through true knowledgeand so of arousing in us a longing for such knowledge.

31. According to the wise, we cannot use our intelligence to think about God at the same time as we experienceHim, or have an intellection of Him while we are perceiving Him directly. By "think about God" I meanspeculate about Him on the basis of an analogy between Him and created beings. By 'perceiving Him directly" Imean experiencing divine or supernatural realities through participation. By 'an intellection of Him" I mean thesimple and unitary

knowledge of God which is derived from created beings. What we have said is confirmed by the fact that, in general,our experience of a thing puts a stop to our thinking about it, and our direct perception of it supersedes ourintellection of it. By 'experience" I mean spiritual knowledge actualized on a level that transcends all thought; andby 'direct perception" I mean a supra-intellective participation in what is known. Perhaps this is what St Paulmystically teaches when he says, 'As

for prophecies, they will pass away; as for speaking in tongues, this will cease;as for knowledge, it too will vanish" (1 Cor. 13:8); for he is clearly referring here to the knowledge gained by theintelligence through thought and intellection.

32. It was indeed indispensable that He who is by nature the Creator of the being of all things should Himself,through grace, accomplish their deification, and in this way reveal Himself to be not only the author of beingbut also the giver of eternal well-being. Every creature is totally ignorant both of its own essential being and ofthat of every other created thing; in consequence no created thing has by nature foreknowledge of anything thatwill come into existence. Only God has such foreknowledge, and He transcends created things. For He knowswhat He is in His essence and He knows of the existence of everything made by Him before it comes intobeing; and it is His purpose to endow created things through grace with a knowledge both of their own essentialbeing and of that of other things; for He will reveal to them the inner principles of their creation, pre-existent ina unified manner within Himself.

33. When God the Logos created human nature He did not make the senses susceptible either to pleasure or to pain;instead. He implanted in it a certain noetic capacity through which men could enjoy Him in an inexpressibleway. By this capacity I mean the intellect's natural longing for God. But on his creation the first man, throughan initial movement towards sensible objects, transferred this longing to his senses, and through them began toexperience pleasure in a way which is contrary to nature. Whereupon God in His providential care for oursalvation implanted pain in us as a kind of chastising force; and so through pain the law of death was wiselyrooted in the body, thus setting limits to the intellect's manic longing, directed, in a manner contrary to nature,towards sensible objects.

34. Pleasure and pain were not created simultaneously with the flesh. On the contrary, it was the fall that led man toconceive and pursue pleasure in a way that corrupted his power of choice, and that also brought upon him, byway of

chastisement, the pain that leads to the dissolution of his nature. Thus because of pleasure sin becamethe freely chosen death of the soul; and pain, by means of this dissolution, brought about the disintegration ofthe material form of the flesh. For God has providentially given man pain he has not chosen, together with thedeath that follows from it, in order to chasten him for the pleasure he has chosen.

35. Because of the meaningless pleasure which invaded human nature, a purposive pain, in the form of multiplesufferings, also gained entrance. It is in and from these sufferings that death takes its origin. Such pain drivesout unnatural pleasure, but does not totally destroy it. Its total destruction is effected by the grace of divinepleasure when this is active in the intellect.

36. Sufferings freely embraced and those that come unsought drive out pleasure and allay its impetus. But they donot destroy the capacity for pleasure which resides in human nature like a natural law. For the cultivation ofvirtue produces dispassion in one's will but not in one's nature. But when dispassion has been attained in one'swill the grace of divine pleasure becomes active in the intellect.

37. All suffering has as its cause some pleasure which has preceded it. Hence all suffering is a debt which thosewho share in human nature pay naturally in return for pleasure. For suffering naturally follows unnaturalpleasure in all men whose generation has been preceded by submission to the rule of causeless pleasure. Idescribe the pleasure that derives from the fall as 'causeless' because clearly it has not come about as the resultof any previous suffering.

38. Once human nature had submitted to the syndrome of pleasure freely chosen followed by pain imposed againstone's will, it would have been completely impossible for it to be restored to its original life had the Creator notbecome man and accepted by His own free choice the pain intended as a chastisement for man's freely chosenpleasure. But in His case the pain was not preceded by generation according to the rule of pleasure. In this way,by accepting a birth which did not originate in pleasure, it was possible for Him to liberate birth from thepenalty imposed on it.

39. After the fall the generation of every man was by nature impassioned and preceded by pleasure. From this ruleno one was exempt. On the contrary, as if discharging a natural debt, all underwent sufferings and the death thatcomes from them. None could find the way to freedom, for all were under the tyranny of ill-gotten pleasure, andso subject to justly deserved sufferings and the still more justly deserved death which they engender. Because ofthis, another kind of suffering and death had to be conceived, first to destroy the ill-gotten pleasure and thejustly deserved sufferings consequent on it - sufferings which have pitiably brought about man's disintegration,since his life originates in the corruption that comes from his generation through pleasure and ends in thecorruption that comes through death: and, second, to restore suffering human nature. This other kind ofsuffering and death was both unjust and undeserved: undeserved because it was in no way generated bypreceding pleasure, and unjust because it was not the consequence of any passion-dominated life. This otherkind of suffering and death, however, had to be devised so that, intervening between ill-gotten pleasure andjustly deserved suffering and death, it could completely abolish the pleasure-provoked origin of human life andits consequent termination in death, and thus free it from the pleasure-pain syndrome. It would then recover itsoriginal blessedness, unpolluted by any of the characteristics inherent in beings subject to generation and decay.

That is why the Logos of God, being by nature fully God, became fully man, with a nature constituted like oursof a soul endowed with intellect and a body capable of suffering: only in His case this nature was without sin,because His birth in time from a woman was not preceded by the slightest trace of that pleasure arising from theprimal disobedience. In His love He deliberately accepted the painful death which, because of pleasure,terminates human life, so that by suffering unjustly He might abolish the pleasure-provoked and unjust originby which this life is dominated. For, unlike that of everyone else, the Lord's death was not the payment of adebt incurred because of pleasure, but was on the contrary a challenge thrown down to pleasure: and so throughthis death He utterly destroys that justly deserved death which ends human life. For the cause of His being wasnot the illicit pleasure, justly punished by death, through which death entered into human life.

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40. The Lord is wise, just and mighty by nature. Because He is wise. He could not be ignorant of the way in whichto heal human nature. Because He is just. He could not save man, whose will was in the grip of sin, in atyrannical fashion. Because He is almighty. He could not prove unequal to the task of completing His healing

41. The wisdom of God is revealed in His becoming by nature a true man. His justice is shown by His assumption,at His nativity, of a passible nature identical to our own. His might is shown by His creation, through Hissuffering and death, of a life that is by nature eternal and of a state of dispassion that is immutable.

42. The Lord revealed His wisdom by the way in which He healed man, becoming man without the slightest changeor mutation. He demonstrated the equity of justice when in His self-abasement He submitted deliberately to thesentence to which what is passible in human nature is subject, and made that sentence a weapon for thedestruction of sin and of the death which comes through sin - that is, for the destruction of pleasure and of thepain which pleasure engenders. It was in this pleasure-pain syndrome that the dominion of sin and death lay: thetyranny of sin committed in pursuit of pleasure, and the lordship of the painful death consequent upon sin. Forthe dominion of pleasure and pain clearly applies to what is passible in human nature. And we seek how toalleviate through pleasure the penalty of pain, thus in the nature of things increasing the penalty. For in ourdesire to escape pain we seek refuge in pleasure, and so try to bring relief to our nature, hard pressed as it is bythe torment of pain. But through trying in this way to blunt pain with pleasure, we but increase our sum ofdebts, for we cannot enjoy pleasure that does not lead to pain and suffering.

43. The Lord gave clear evidence of His supreme power in what He endured from hostile forces when He endowedhuman nature with an incorruptible form of generation. For through His passion He conferred dispassion,through suffering repose, and through death eternal life. By His privations in the flesh He re-established andrenewed the human state, and by His own incarnation He bestowed on human nature the supranatural grace ofdeification.

44. God became true man and bestowed on human nature a new or second form of generation leading us throughsuffering to the pleasure of the life held in store for us. For when our forefather

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Adam broke the divine commandment, in the place of the original form of generation he conceived and introducedinto human nature, at the prompting of the serpent, another form, originating in pleasure and terminating throughsuffering in death. This pleasure was not the consequence of antecedent suffering but, rather, resulted in suffering.And because he introduced this ill-gotten pleasure-provoked form of generation, he deservedly brought on himself,and on all men bom in the flesh from him, the doom of death through suffering. Thus, when the Lord became manand created in human nature a new form of generation, accomplished by the Holy Spirit, He accepted that deaththrough suffering, justly deserved in the case of Adam, but in His case not deserved at all because His owngeneration was not provoked by the ill-gotten pleasure introduced by our forefather through his disobedience; andby doing so He destroyed whatever in the origin and doom of human generation according to Adam was not initiallyfrom God, and made all those who were reborn spiritually from Him free from its guilt.

45. The Lord removed the pleasure which arises from the law of sin, in order to nullify the effects of generationaccording to the flesh in those reborn in Him by grace through the Spirit. For when the pleasure of generationinherited from Adam is no longer active within them, but only the pain that arose because of Adam, He allowsthem to experience death, which was originally a sentence imposed on human nature as a penalty for sin: but intheir case it is not a debt payable for sin, but an event that God in His providence permits, because of theirnatural condition, for the purpose of destroying sin. For when death is not bom of that pleasure whosechastisement is its natural function, it begets eternal life. For just as Adam's life of pleasure gave birth to deathand corruption, so the Lord's death on account of Adam, being unconditioned by the pleasure that originated inAdam, was the genitor of eternal life.

46. After the fall human life was generated by means of pleasure-provoked conception through sperm and of birthinto the world of transience: and it ended in painful death through corruption. But the Lord was not generated inthe flesh in the same manner, nor was He conquered by death.

47. Sin first enticed Adam and tricked him into breaking the commandment; and by giving substance to sensualpleasure and by

attaching itself through such pleasure to the very root of nature, it brought the sentence of death on all nature, sincethrough man it impels all created things towards death. All this was contrived by the devil, that spawn of sin andfather of iniquity who through pride expelled himself from divine glory, and through envy of us and of God expelledAdam from paradise (cf. Wisd. 2:24), in order to destroy the works of God and dissolve what had been brought intoexistence.

48. Since the devil is jealous both of us and of God, he persuaded man by guile that God was jealous of him (cf.Gen. 3:6), and so made him break the commandment. The devil is jealous of God lest His power should be seenactually divinizing man: and he is jealous of man lest through the attainment of virtue man should become apersonal participant in divine gloiy. The foul thing is jealous not only of us, because of the glory which weattain with God through virtue, but also of God, because of that power, worthy of all praise, with which Heaccomplishes our salvation.

49. In Adam the sentence of death was imposed on nature (cf Gen. 2:17), since sensual pleasure had become theprinciple of its generation. In Christ it was on sin that the sentence of death was imposed (cf Rom. 8:3), for inChrist nature was given a new form of generation, unconditioned by sensual pleasure.

50. If we who have been given the honor of becoming the house of God (cf Heb. 3:6) by grace through the Spiritmust patiently endure suffering for the sake of righteousness (cf. Heb. 10:36) in order to condemn sin, and mustreadily submit

like criminals to insolent death even though we are good, 'what will be the fate of those whorefuse to obey the Gospel of God?" (1 Pet. 4:17). That is to say, what will be the fate or sentence of those whonot only have diligently kept that pleasure-provoked, nature-dominating Adamic form of generation alive andactive in their soul and body, will and nature, right up to the end; but who also accept neither God the Father,who summons them through His incarnate Son, nor the Son and Mediator Himself, the ambassador of theFather (cf. 1 Tim. 2:5)? To reconcile us with the Father, at His Father's wish the Son deliberately gave Himselfto death on our behalf so that, just as He consented to be dishonored for our sake by assuming our passions, toan equal degree He might glorify us with the beauty of His own divinity.

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5L God is the limitless, eternal and infinite abode of those who attain salvation. He is all things to all menaccording to their degree of righteousness; or, rather. He has given Himself to each man according to themeasure in which each man, in the light of spiritual knowledge, has endured suffering in this life for the sake ofrighteousness. Thus He resembles the soul that reveals its activity in the members of the body according to theactual capacity of each member, and that itself keeps the members in being and sustains their life. This beingthe case, 'where will the ungodly and the sinner appear' (1 Pet. 4:18) if he is deprived of such grace? For if aman cannot receive the active presence of God on which his well-being depends, and so fails to attain the divinelife that is beyond age, time and place, where will he be?

52. If a person refuses to allow God, the abode of all who are saved and source of their well-being, to sustain hislife and to assure his well-being, what will become of him? And if the righteous man will be saved only withmuch difficulty (cf. Prov. 11:31. LXX: 1 Pet. 4:18), what will become of the man who has not attained anyprinciple of devotion and virtue in this present life?

53. By a single infinitely powerful act of will God in His goodness will gather all together, angels and men, thegood and the evil. But, although God pervades all

things absolutely, not all will participate in Him equally: theywill participate in Him according to what they are.

54. All, whether angels or men, who in everything have maintained a natural justice in their disposition, and havemade themselves actively receptive to the inner principles of nature in a way that accords with the universalprinciple of well-being, will participate totally in the divine life that irradiates them; for they have submittedtheir will to God's will. Those who in all things have failed to maintain a natural justice in their disposition, andhave been actively disruptive of the inner principles of nature in a way that conflicts with the universal principleof well-being, will lapse completely from divine life, in accordance with their dedication to what lacks being;for they have opposed their will to God's will. It is this that separates them from God, for the principle of well-being, vivified by good actions and illumined by divine life, is not operative in their will.

55. The scales on which the disposition of each being, whether

angel or man, will be weighed at the last judgment is the principle of nature, which shows clearly whether that angelor man inclines towards well-being or its opposite. It is in accordance with this inclination that each beingparticipates or fails to participate in divine life. For God will gather together into His presence all angels and menaccording to their being and their eternal being. But He will gather together in a special way according to theireternal well-being only those who are holy, leaving to those who are not holy eternal lack of well-being as the mixedfruit of their disposition.

56. In the mystery of the divine incarnation the distinction between the two natures, divine and human, in Christdoes not imply that He is divided into two persons. On the one hand, a fourth person is not added to the Trinity,which would be the case if the incarnate Christ was divided into two persons: while on the other hand, sincenothing can be coessential or cognate with the Divinity,

there must be a distinction between the divine andhuman natures in Him. In other words, in the incarnation the two natures have united to form a single person,not a single nature. Thus not only does the hypostatic union formed by the coming together of the two naturesconstitute a perfect unity, but also the different elements which come together in the indivisible union retaintheir natural character, free from all change and confusion.

57. With regard to Christ, we do not speak of a distinction of persons, because the Trinity remained a Trinity afterthe incarnation of the Logos. A fourth person was not added to the Holy Trinity as a result of the incarnation.We speak of a distinction of natures to avoid asserting that the flesh is coessential in its nature with the Logos.

58. He who does not distinguish the two natures in Christ has no basis for affirming that the Logos became fleshwithout change. He does not acknowledge that after the union that which assumed and that which was assumedare preserved according to their nature in the single person of the one Christ, our God and Savior.

59. There is after the union a distinction in Christ between the nature of His flesh and that of His divinity, fordivinity and flesh are never identical in their essence. Hence the union of the two elements, divine and human,which have come together has generated not a single nature, but a single person. With regard to this person,there is no distinction in Christ of any kind whatsoever, for

as a person the Logos is identical with His own flesh. Had there been such a distinction in Christ, He could not beone person in every way. Where the person of Christ is concerned. His oneness does not admit of any kind ofdistinction whatsoever, and in every way it is, and is affirmed to be, a unity for all eternity.

60. With the help of hope, faith perfects our love for God. By making us keep the commandments, a clearconscience gives substance to our love for our

neighbor. For a clear conscience cannot be charged with thebreaking of a commandment. Only those who seek true salvation believe in their hearts in these three things,faith, hope and love.

61. Nothing is swifter than believing, and nothing is easier than to confess orally the grace that comes from whathas been believed. It is his belief that reveals the believer's living love for his Creator; it is his confession of thegrace received that reveals his godly affection for his neighbor. Love and genuine affection - that is, faith and aclear conscience - are clearly the result of a hidden impulse of the heart; for the heart is fully able to generatewithout using external matter.

62. If a person's will is not directed towards what is good, it is inevitably directed towards evil; for it cannot bestationary with regard to both. Because it implies obduracy with regard to virtue Scripture describes the soul'ssluggishness in pursuing what is good as 'stones'; while it describes as 'timber'' the soul's readiness to commitevil (cf. Zech. 5:4). But sense perception allied with the activity of the intellect produces virtue with spiritualknowledge.

63. By "dividing wall' (Eph. 2:14) Scripture means the natural law of the body, and by "barrier" (ibid.) thatattachment to the passions according to the law of the flesh which constitutes sin. For attachment to shamefulpassions is a barrier set up by the law of nature - of the passible aspect of nature - walling off soul from body,and preventing a person from practicing the virtues in such a way that by means of the soul their principlepasses into the flesh. Once their principle has passed into the flesh and has overthrown the law of nature - of thepassible aspect of nature - it destroys the attachment to unnatural passions which that law imposes.

64. When through his guile the devil pillages the knowledge of God inherent in nature and arrogates it to himself,he is a thief, because he is attempting to transfer devotion from God to himself.

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This he does by diverting the inteUect from its contemplation of the spiritual essences of created things and bylimiting its scope merely to their superficial visible aspects. Then, after perverting the soul's natural functions, hespeciously impels it to practice what is contrary to nature: by means of what appears to be good he persuasivelyattaches its desire to what is evil, and by swearing falsely on the name of the Lord he leads the soul thus persuadedtowards things other than those he has promised. He is a thief because he arrogates the spiritual knowledge of natureto himself; he is a perjurer because he persuades the soul to labor to no purpose for what is contrary to nature.

65. A thief is a man who in order to deceive his hearers pretends to reverence divine principles. Although he has notcome to know the true quality of these principles through his actions, he traffics in glory merely by speakingabout it, hoping that in this manner he will be thought righteous by his hearers and so capture their admiration.To put it simply, he whose way of life does not match his speech, and whose inner disposition is opposed tospiritual knowledge, is a thief whose appropriation of what is not his proves him to be evil. Scripture fittinglyaddresses these words to him: "But to the wicked God says, "Why do you speak of my statutes and appropriatemy covenant with your mouth?" ' (Ps. 50:16. LXX).

66. A man is also a thief when he conceals his soul's unseen evil behind a seemingly virtuous way of life, anddisguises his inner disposition with an affected innocence. Just as one kind of thief filches his audience's mindby uttering words of wisdom, so this kind pilfers the senses of those who see him by his pretence of virtue. Tohim it will be said: "Be ashamed of yourselves, all you who are dressed in clothes that do not belong to you' (cf.Zeph. 1:8), and: "In that day the Lord will reveal their pretence' (Isa. 3:17. LXX). I seem to hear God sayingthese things to me daily in the hidden workshop of my heart, and feel that I am explicitly condemned on bothcounts.

67. A man is a perjurer - that is to say, he swears falsely on the name of the Lord - when he promises God that hewill lead a life of virtue and instead pursues what is alien to his promise, in this way breaking, through neglectof the commandments, the vows of his profession of the religious life. To put it briefly, he who has freelychosen to live according to God and is not perfectly dead to this

present life is a liar and a perjurer, since he has sworn an oath before God - that is, he has promised Him to followthe spiritual path irreproachably - and he has not fulfilled his promise. For this reason he merits no praise at all. Foralthough 'everyone that swears by Him shall be praised' (Ps. 63:11. LXX), this applies only to those who, havingdedicated their life to God, fulfill the vows of their promise through truly performing works of righteousness.

68. He who simulates spiritual knowledge merely by the utterance of words filches the mind of those who hear himin order to boost his own reputation. Similarly, he who simulates virtue in his outward behavior pilfers the sightof those who look at him, once more in order to promote his own self-glory. Both steal by means of deceit, thefirst perverting his audience's mind, the second the bodily sense of those who see him.

69. The person who fulfils the promises he has made merits praise because he has sworn an oath before God andhas remained faithful to it; conversely, the person who breaks his promises will be impugned and dishonoredbecause he has sworn an oath before God and has been found false.

70. Not every man who comes into this world is necessarily enlightened by the Logos (cf John 1:9), for manyremain unenlightened and have no share in the light of knowledge. But every man who comes into the realworld of the virtues by his own free will, and so through a voluntary birth, is unquestionably enlightened by theLogos, receiving an immutable state of virtue and an infallible understanding of true knowledge.

71. Not all persons and things designated in Holy Scripture by the same word are necessarily to be understood inexactly the same way. On the contrary, if we are to infer the meaning of the written text correctly, each thingmentioned must clearly be understood according to the significance that underlies its verbal form.

72. If always understood in the same way, none of the persons, places, times, or any of the other things mentionedin Scripture, whether animate or inanimate, sensible or intelligible, will yield either the literal or spiritual senseintended.

Thus he who wishes to study the divine knowledge of Scripture without floundering must respect thedifferences of the recorded events or sayings, and interpret each in a different way, assigning to it theappropriate spiritual sense according to the context of place and time.

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73. Everyone should be taught to live and govern himself according to his intelligence alone, and to have so little

concern for his body that he is able to break, through strenuous effort, his soul's attachment to it, and so to freehis soul from all images of material things. The senses, which at first rejected the intelligence and accepted thefolly of sensual pleasure, like a sinuous snake, must be quelled by the intelligence. It was because man hadrejected intelligence that the sentence of death was justly imposed on him in order to put an end to the devil'saccess to his soul.

74. The senses belong to a single family but are divided into five individual types. Through the apprehensive forceparticular to each individual type, the deluded soul is persuaded to desire the corresponding sensible objectsinstead of God. Hence the man of intelligence will choose to die voluntarily according to the flesh before theadvent of that death which comes whether he likes it or not. and to this end he will completely sever his innerdisposition from the senses.

75. When the senses have the intellect in their clutches, they propagate polytheism through each individual senseorgan; because in their slavery to the passions they pay divine honors to the sensible objects corresponding toeach organ.

76. When a man sticks to the mere letter of Scripture, his nature is governed by the senses alone, in this wayproving his soul's attachment to the flesh. For if the letter is not understood in a spiritual way, its significance isrestricted to the level of the senses, which do not allow its full meaning to pass over into the intellect. When theletter is appropriated by his senses alone, he receives it Judaic-wise

merely in the literal sense, and so livesaccording to the flesh, spiritually dying each day the death of sin on account of his forceful senses: for hecannot put his body's pursuits to death by the Spirit in order to live the life of bliss in the Spirit. "For if you liveaccording to the flesh, you will die,' says St Paul, "but if through the Spirit you put to death the body's pursuits,you will live' (Rom. 8:13).

77. Let us not light the divine lamp - that is, the illuminating principle of knowledge - through contemplation andthe practice of the virtues, and then place it under the grain bin (cf Matt. 5:15): for if we do we shall becondemned for confining the incomprehensible power of wisdom to the letter. On the contrary, let us put

it on a lampstand - the Holy Church - beaconing to all men the light of divine truth from the summit of

contemplation.

78. He who like Job and the courageous martyrs bears the assaults of unsought-for trials and temptations with anunshakeable will is a powerful lamp: for by his bravery and patience he keeps the light of salvation burning,since he possesses the Lord as his strength and his song (cf Ps. 118:14). And he who is familiar with the tricksof the devil and experienced in the close combat of the unseen warfare, is likewise illuminated by the light ofspiritual knowledge and becomes another lamp, saying with St Paul, 'We are not ignorant of Satan's devices' (2Cor. 2:11).

79. Through fear, devotion and spiritual knowledge the Holy Spirit purifies those blessed with the purity of thevirtues. Through strength, counsel and understanding He illumines those worthy of light with the knowledge ofthe inner and quickening essences of created beings. Through radiant, simple and complete wisdom He grantsperfection to those honored with deification, leading them directly towards the Cause of created beings by everyway that men can be

so led. The perfect are known only by the divine qualities of goodness with which theyrecognize themselves in God and God in themselves, since there is no dividing wall between them. For nothingintervenes between wisdom and God. They will attain a state not subject to change or mutation, having entirelytranscended all the intermediate states in which there is a danger of going astray with respect to spiritualknowledge. By these intermediate states is meant the being of the intelligible and sensible realities throughwhich the human intellect is led on its journey to God, the Cause of all being.

80. Practical philosophy, or the practice of the virtues, is effectuated by fear, devotion and spiritual knowledge.Natural contemplation in the Spirit is achieved through strength, counsel and understanding. Mystical theologyis granted only by divine wisdom.

81. A lamp cannot be kept burning without oil: nor can the light of spiritual gifts continue to shine unless oneinwardly sustains it with actions and thoughts consonant with it. For every spiritual gift requires acorresponding inner quality in the recipient to feed it spiritually as though with oil, thus preserving its presence.

82. Without the olive tree there can be no genuine olive oil. Without a jar to keep it in, oil cannot be kept. Unless alamp is fed

with oil, its light will go out. Similarly, without Holy Scripture, no intellection can be truly and divinely effective.Without an inward quality or disposition capable, like ajar, of embracing it, no divine intellection can be retained.Unless the light of spiritual knowledge present in God's gifts is fed with divine intellections, it will go out.

83. I think that the olive tree on the left side of the candlestick (cf. Zech. 4:3) signifies the Old Testament, in whichthe emphasis is mainly on practical philosophy; while that on the right signifies the New Testament, whichteaches a

new revelation and brings each believer to a state of contemplation. The first supplies the qualities ofvirtue, the second the principles of spiritual knowledge to those who meditate on what is divine. The first clearsaway the mist of visible things and raises the intellect to realities that are akin to it when it is purged of allmaterial fantasies. The second purifies the intellect of its attachment to materiality, with resolute strengthknocking out as though with a hammer the nails that rivet will and disposition to the body.

84. The Old Testament makes the body obedient to the intelligence and raises it towards the soul by means of thevirtues, preventing the intellect from being dragged down towards the body. The New Testament fires theintellect with love and unites it to God. Thus the Old Testament makes the body one in its activity with theintellect; the New Testament makes the intellect one with God through the state of grace. So close is thelikeness to God which the intellect acquires, that God, who is not known as He is by nature in Himself toanyone in any way at all, is known through it just as an archetype is known from an image.

85. Since the Old Testament is a symbol of the practice of the virtues, it brings the body's activity into harmonywith that of the intellect. Since the New Testament confers contemplation and spiritual knowledge, it illumineswith divine intellections and gifts of grace the intellect that cleaves to it mystically. The Old Testament suppliesthe man of spiritual knowledge with the qualities of virtue; the New Testament endows the man practicing thevirtues with the principles of true knowledge.

86. God may be called and actually is the Father by grace only of those whose will and disposition have beenreborn in the Spirit through the practice of the virtues. By means of this birth they bear

in their soul and manifest in the virtues the imprint of God their Father. Through their way of life they make thosewho see them glorify God by reforming themselves, and so they provide an excellent pattern of virtue for others to

imitate. For God is glorified not by mere words but by works of righteousness, which proclaim the majesty of Godfar more effectively than words.

87. Because it is concerned with the senses, the natural law is represented by the olive tree on the left (cf. Zech.4:3): it supplies the qualities of virtue to the intelligence and makes spiritual knowledge express itself in action.Because it is concerned with the intellect, the spiritual law is represented by the olive tree on the right: it imbuessense-perception with the spiritual principles of created things and makes conduct purposive and intelligent.

88. He who embodies spiritual knowledge in his practice of the virtues and animates this practice with spiritualknowledge has found the perfect method of accomplishing the divine work. He in whom spiritual knowledgeand ascetic practice are not united either makes the first an unsubstantial illusion or turns the second into alifeless idol. For spiritual knowledge not put into practice does not differ in any way from illusion, lacking suchpractice to give it real substance; and practice uninformed by intelligence is like an idol, since it has noknowledge to animate it.

89. The mystery of our salvation informs our way of life with intelligence and makes intelligence the glory of ourway of life. It turns our practice of the virtues into contemplation manifest in terms of action, and ourcontemplation into divinely initiated practice. To put it briefly, it makes virtue the manifestation of spiritualknowledge and spiritual knowledge the sustaining power of virtue. Through both virtue and spiritual knowledgeit displays a single compact wisdom. In this way we may know that by grace both Testaments agree in all thingswith each other, in their combination consummating a mystery more single and undivided than soul and body ina human being.

90. Just as soul and body combine to produce a human being, so practice of the virtues and contemplation togetherconstitute a unique spiritual wisdom, and the Old and New Testaments together form a single mystery.Goodness by nature belongs to God alone, from whom all things capable by nature of receiving light and good-ness are enlightened and blessed with goodness by participation.

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91. He who uses his intellect to apprehend the visible world contemplates the intelligible world. He imbues hissense-perception with the noetic realities that he contemplates, and informs his intellect with the inner essencesof what he perceives with the senses. In various ways he transfers the structure of the noetic world to the worldof the senses: and conversely he transfers the complex unity of the sensible world to the intellect. Heapprehends the sensible world in the noetic world, since he has transferred into the intellect the inner essencesof what can be perceived by the senses; and in the sensible world he perceives the noetic world, for he hasadeptly harnessed his intellect with its archetypes to his sense-perception.

92. In the text, 'My head went down to the clefts of the mountains' (Jonah 2:6. LXX), the prophet called the firstprinciple of unity the head, since it is the source of all virtue. The "clefts of the mountains' are the counsels ofevil spirits, by which our intellect is engulfed because of the fall. The lowest depths of the earth (cf. Jonah 2:7.LXX) are that inner state which has no perception whatsoever of divine knowledge or any impetus towards thelife of virtue. The abyss (cf Jonah 2:6. LXX) is the ignorance that overlays an evil disposition, like the deepwaters covering the sea bed. Alternatively the abyss is the sea bed itself, signifying a firmly grounded evildisposition. The eternal bars (cf. Jonah 2:7. LXX) strengthening this abysmal state are impassioned attachmentsto material things.

93. The patient endurance of the saints exhausts the evil power that attacks them, since it makes them glory insufferings undergone for the sake of truth. It teaches those too much concerned with a life in the flesh to deepenthemselves through such sufferings instead of pursuing ease and comfort: and it makes the flesh's natural weak-ness in the endurance of suffering a foundation for overwhelming spiritual power. For the natural weakness ofthe saints is precisely such a foundation, since the Lord has made their weakness stronger than the proud devil.

94. The principle of grace has to pass through many trials in order to reach the human race - that is, the Church ofthe Gentiles - just as Jonah had to pass through many trials before he arrived at the great city of Nineveh. Onlythen does it persuade the ruling law of nature to rise from its throne - that is, to abandon its former evil

disposition due to its involvement with the senses; to remove its robe - that is, to expunge the vanity of worldlyglory from its conduct: to cover itself with sackcloth - that is, with mourning, and with the difficult rough training inhardship such as befits a life lived according to God; and to sit in ashes - symbolizing poverty of spirit, in whicheveryone who is learning to live a devout life sits, lashed by his conscience because of the sins he has committed (cf.

Jonah 3:1-9).

95. Observe, with reference to this passage from Jonah, how the king represents the natural law. The throne is animpassioned disposition in alliance with the senses. The robe is the display of self-esteem. Sackcloth is the griefof repentance. Ashes are humility. Men are those who sin in relation to the intelligence; beasts those who sin inrelation to desire: cattle those who sin in relation to their incensive power; and sheep those who sin in relation tothe contemplation of visible things.

96. The passions of the flesh may be described as belonging to the left hand, self-conceit as belonging to the righthand (cf Jonah 4:11). Thus he who through the correct observance of virtue makes himself oblivious to thepassions of the flesh, and who because of his unfaltering spiritual knowledge is not infected by the disease ofself-conceit on account of his achievements, has become a man who does not know his left hand or his righthand; for he is not excited by the passions of the flesh, and he does not love transitory glory. Hence it seemslikely that by the right hand Scripture means self-esteem on account of supposed achievements, and by the lefthand licentiousness in shameful passions. For the principle of virtue does not know the sin of the flesh, whichbelongs to the left hand; and the principle of knowledge does not know the soul's evil, which belongs to theright hand.

97. Spiritual knowledge of virtue - true and actualized knowledge of the cause of virtue - naturally produces totalignorance of the excess and deficiency which lie

to the right and left of the norm of virtue. Nothing in theintelligence can be contrary to the intelligence. Thus he who has come to apprehend the principle of virtue willclearly have no way of knowing the state that is contrary to the intelligence. One cannot examine two oppositessimultaneously, and know the one at the same time as the other.

98. There is no principle of unbelief in belief, or natural cause of

darkness in light, and the devil and Christ cannot manifest themselves jointly (cf. 2 Cor. 6:14-15). In the same way,nothing unintelligent can coexist with what is in accordance with the intelligence. If it is absolutely impossible forwhat is contrary to the intelligence to coexist with what is in accordance with it, he who has come to apprehend theprinciple of virtue does not know the state that is contrary to the intelligence in any way at all; for he knows virtueonly as it is, not as it is thought to be. That is why he has no knowledge either of his right hand through excess, or of

his left hand through deficiency. For in both these what is contrary to the intelhgence is obviously present.

99. Unbelief means rejection of the commandments; belief is acceptance of them. Darkness is ignorance of thegood; light is knowledge of it. Christ is the name given to the essence and subsistence of the good; the devil isthe depraved state that produces all sins.

100.If the intelligence is a norm and measure of created beings, what falls short of that norm and measure, oralternatively what goes beyond it, is equivalent to unintelligence and so is contrary to the intelligence. Bothgoing beyond the norm and falling short of it induce a lapse from what truly exists. The first, by making theintellect overstep its measure, produces the conviction that life's path is uncertain and ill-defined, that it doesnot have God as its preconceived goal, and that there is something better than what is best; the second, throughslackness of

the intellect, produces the conviction that the preconceived goal is confined to the sensory world,and so results in attention being given merely to the senses. Only he who unites himself to the principle ofvirtue, and has concentrated the whole power of his intellect in this principle, does not know and experiencethese things; for he cannot be affected by anything that goes beyond the intelligence or is contrary to it.

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1. Through the diligent practice of the virtues the natural mtelligence is raised towards the intellect. Throughcontemplation the intellect leads towards wisdom the man who aspires to spiritual knowledge. Passion, which iscontrary to the intelligence, induces the man who neglects the commandments to descend to the realm of thesenses, and the result of this is the intellect's attachment to sensual pleasure.

2. Virtue is a stable and utterly dispassionate state of righteousness. Nothing stands opposed to it, for it bears thestamp of God, and there is nothing contrary to that. God is the cause of the virtues; and a living knowledge ofGod is realized when the person who has truly recognized God changes his inner state so that it conforms moreclosely to the Spirit.

3. If intelligence has determined the origin of each created being, no such being by nature either goes beyond itselfor falls short of itself. Thus the norm for created things is their desire and knowledge of their Cause, and theirmeasure is the active imitation of their Cause in so far as this is within their scope. For if created beings arecarried in their desire beyond the proper norm and measure, this makes their life fruitless, since then they do notfind their goal in God - and it is in God that the desire of all things finds its repose, receiving the enjoyment of

Him as its self-subsistent consummation. When created beings in their desire faU short of the norm andmeasure, their life is again fruitless, since then they find their goal not in God but in the realm of the senses, inwhich there is a pleasurable but illusory enjoyment of the passions.

4. An intellect consecrated -unconditionally to the Cause of created bemgs will be in a state of completeunknowing, since it will not contemplate any creative principle in God who, so far as all

causation is concerned. Is in essence beyond such principles. When an intellect is drawn away from all createdbeings towards God, it does not observe their inner principles, but only contemplates God ineffably, being with Himby grace. For the intellect that reaches up to God in ecstasy relinquishes its knowledge of the inner principles of bothcorporeal and incorporeal things. For nothing sequent to God can be contemplated simultaneously with God.

5. Conceit is a truly accursed passion. It is a combination of two vices, pride and self-esteem. Pride denies theCause of virtue and nature, while self-esteem adulterates nature and virtue itself. A proud man does nothing thataccords with God's will, and a man full of self-esteem achieves nothing that accords with nature.

6. The mark of pride is to deny that God is the author of virtue and nature: the mark of self-esteem is to makedivisions in nature and so to treat some things as worthless. Conceit is their natural offspring, being an evil statecomposed of a voluntary denial of God and ignorance of the equal dignity that things possess by nature.

7. Conceit is a mixture of pride and self-esteem. In its contempt for God It blasphemously maligns providence;while in its alienation from nature it treats everything belonging to nature in an unnatural way, and thus corruptsits beauty by misuse.

8. The spirit of scorching heat (cf Jonah 4:8) signifies not only trials and temptations but also that abandonmentby God which deprived the Jews of the gifts of grace. Affinity with the Spirit dissolves the soul's proclivity forthe flesh, concentrates our longing on God and bmds our will to Him.

9. When the intelligence is not dommated by the senses, the natural law persuades all men instinctively to embrace

what is akin to them and of the same species, since nature itself teaches men to help those in need. In addition,the natural law persuades every man to wish for everybody else whatever he considers agreeable when done tohim by others. This is what the Lord teaches when He says, "Treat others as you want them to treat you" (Luke6:31).

10. The work of the natural law is to bring into harmony all men's voluntary relationships with one another. Thosewhose nature is governed by the intelligence naturally share a single disposition. When men have the samedisposition, their morality and living will obviously be of one kind. In such circumstances, the bond linkingpeople together voluntarily will also be one and the

same, leading all men through-their own volition towards the single principle of nature. When that principle isrealized, the divisions now prevailing in nature because of man's self-love will totally vanish. The written law,which controls the unruly impulses of the foolish by fear of punishment, accustoms them by its teaching to thinkspecifically about giving to each other what is equitable. In this way with the passing of time the rule of justicegrows ever more firmly established within them, until it becomes part of their nature. It turns fear into a dispositionwhich is gently and gradually strengthened by a conscious desire for the good, and habit into an inner state purifiedby a forgetfulness of past sins and giving birth within itself to a love for others.

11. The written law, by preventing wrongdoing through fear, accustoms one to do what is right. In time suchcustom produces a disposition filled with the love of righteousness, and this in turn produces a settled state ofgoodness, obliterating the memory of past sins.

12. The law of grace directly teaches those who are led by it to imitate God Himself. For - if it is permitted to speakin this way - despite the fact that because of sin we were His enemies, God loved us so much more than Himselfthat, although He is beyond every being. He entered without changing into our being, supra-essentially took onhuman nature, became man and, wishing to reveal Himself as a man among men, did not refuse to make Hisown the penalty we pay. And as in His providence He became man, so He deified us by grace, in this wayteaching us not only to cleave to one another naturally and to love others spiritually as ourselves, but also, likeGod, to be more concerned for others than for ourselves, and as proof of our love for each other readily tochoose, as virtue enjoins, to die for others. For, as Scripture tells us, there is no greater love than to lay downone's life for a friend (cf John 11:13).

13. To recapitulate: the law of nature is a natural principle which takes control of the sense-realm in order toovercome its lack of intelligence; for lack of intelligence sunders what by nature belongs together. The writtenlaw is a natural principle which, when the lack of intelligence in the sense-realm has been overcome, acquires inaddition the spiritual desire which maintains the reciprocity and interdependence of kindred beings. The law ofgrace is

a principle transcending nature whose purpose is our deification. It transforms nature without altering itsfundamental character; and, in a manner which defies comprehension, reveals to human nature, as if in an image, thearchetype that lies beyond bemg and nature and is the ground of eternal well-being.

14. To treat one's neighbor as oneself is to be concerned simply with his existence. This pertains to the natural law.To love one's neighbor as oneself is to care, in a way that accords with virtue, for his well-being. This isprescribed by the written law (cf Lev. 19:18; Mark 12:33). To love one's neighbor more than oneself is aprerogative of the law of grace.

15. He who curbs the impulses towards bodily pleasure learns the laws of

providence, which restrain theinflammatory matter of the passions. He who accepts the whips of bodily pain is taught the laws of judgment,which cleanse him from the defilement of his earlier life through unsought sufferings.

16. Scripture represents Jonah as grieving on account of the booth and the gourd - that is to say, on account of theflesh and the pleasure of the flesh - and it represents God as caring for Nineveh (cf. Jonah 4:1-11). From this itis clear that, compared with the things valued and prized by men, what is loved by God is better and moreprecious by far. For the things that men value lack being; they only seem to exist because of mistaken judgment,but have no principle of existence at all: there is only the fantasy, which cheats the intellect and through passionsupplies non-existent things with empty form but no real substance.

17. An accurate knowledge of the utterances of the Spirit is revealed only to those who are worthy of the Spirit.When through diligent cultivation of the virtues they have swept the soot of the passions from their intellect,and have made it like a pure, resplendent mirror, they receive the knowledge of divine things which, as soon asit strikes them, is imprinted upon them and given form in them as a face is reflected in a mirror. Those whose

life is smutted by the passions may possibly deduce knowledge of divine things by means of plausibleguesswork; but they cannot grasp or express such knowledge with any accuracy.

18. A man whose intellect has been formed by the knowledge that comes by dint of the virtues through the divmeSpirit is said to experience divine things; for he has acquired such knowledge not

by nature, thanks simply to his existence, but by grace, thanks to his participation in it. When a man has not receivedknowledge by grace, even though he calls a particular thing spiritual, he does not know its true character fromexperience, for mere learning does not produce a state of spiritual

knowledge.

19. An intellect totally purified by the virtues is automatically initiated into their inner principles, and conies toexpress in its own character the spiritual knowledge which is divinely stamped with their impress. For in itselfevery intellect is formless and without any specific quality of expression: its form is acquired, being either thatof the knowledge which arises from the virtues through the Spirit, or that of ignorance, which supervenesthrough the passions.

20. Everyone who has fallen away from divine love is ruled through sensual pleasure by the carnal law. With such alaw, he cannot keep a single divine commandment, nor does he wish to: preferring a life of pleasure to a liferuled by virtue and lived in the Spirit of God, he embraces ignorance instead of knowledge.

21. A person who does not penetrate with his intellect towards the divine and spiritual beauty contained within theletter of the Law develops a propensity for pleasure - that is, an attachment to the world and a love of worldlythings; for his knowledge derives merely from the literal expression of the Law.

22. The name Mephibosheth, meaning 'ignominy of mouth' (cf 2 Sam. 4:4) signifies the intellect's preoccupationwith thoughts devoted to the world and to bodily indulgence. When we do not penetrate with our intellectbeyond the material form exhibited in the letter of the Law, such a world-loving disposition and suchpreoccupation with thoughts of sensual indulgence are bound to develop in accordance with the proclivity ofour will. For our intellect will be preoccupied with whatever it is we gravitate towards.

23. Or again, 'ignominy of mouth' signifies that impulsion of the inteUect which gives fonn to the passions andmoulds beauty in a way that accords with sensual pleasure. For without the intellect's inventive power nopassion can assume form. The name of Mephibosheth's brother Armoni, meaning "anathema' (cf. 2 Sam. 21:8),signifies the gross, ugly and shapeless impulsion of the passions;

while 'ignominy of mouth' signifies that impulsion of the intellect which gives form to the passion so that it canbe perceived by the

senses, and which in the shape of mental images provides the passion with suitable matter to work on.

24. Anyone who belie\'es that the sacrifices, feasts. Sabbaths, and celebrations of the new moon specified in theLaw have been instituted by God for the sake of physical license and relaxation will fall completely into thepower of the passions, and will be ignominiously polluted by the shameful thoughts they stimulate. He will bein the sway of the corruptible world and preoccupied with thoughts of bodily indulgence. Dominated by thematter and form of passion, he will be unable to value anything except what is subject to decay, senses, andwhich in the shape of mental images provides the passion with suitable matter to work on.

25. He who persuades himself that physical self-indulgence is commanded by God in the Law gleefully acceptsgluttony as a gift from God. In this spirit he develops forms of behavior which pollute the senses throughmisuse, senses, and which in the shape of mental images provides the passion with suitable matter to work on.

26. When the soul's contemplative faculty embraces self-indulgence as a divine command, it makes an unnaturaluse of the senses, not allowing them to express themselves at all in accordance with nature. In thesecircumstances the soul's contemplative faculty begets an implicit or else an active state of passion, and acceptsgluttony as a divine prescription, thus developing forms of behavior that defile the senses by misuse and destroythe natural principles and seeds in created beings.

27. Nobody can embrace the least natural principle or thought if he devotes himself merely to a literal observanceof the Law, since symbols and nature are not identical. Because of the difference between symbols and Ac

nature of created beings, a person who stops short at the symbols of the Law is incapable of a noetic vision ofthe nature of created beings and cannot encompass the inner essences implanted in them by their Creator.

28. He whose God is his belly and who prides himself on his ignominy as if it

were something splendid (cf Phil.3:19) is merely cleaving to the shameful passions as if they were divine. Because of this he pursues only what istemporal, that is to say, matter and form and the perverted impulses of the five senses. When the sensescombine with matter and form they produce passion, killing and effacing natural principles. For, in accordancewith the principle of being, passion and nature in no way coexist with each other: the principle of nature isnever naturally conjoined with passion, and passion is never co-engendered with nature.

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25. He who does not believe that the scriptures are spiritual is unaware of his lack of spiritual knowledge, yet wastesaway with hunger. Strictly speaking, however, hunger is a deprivation of blessings that we already know byexperience and a total absence and dearth of the spiritual nourishment that sustains the soul. How, then, can oneregard as hunger or loss one's complete destitution with regard to what one has never once known in any way ataU?

30. The truly hungry are the faithful who have already acquired knowledge of the truth. So, too, is the soul of everyman who has abandoned the grace of spiritual contemplation and become a slave to the literal and externalforms of religion; for he does not nourish his intellect with the splendor of his intellections, but imbues hisperception with impassioned fantasies derived from the material aspects of scriptural symbols.

31. Everyone who does not apply himself to the spiritual con-templation of Holy Scripture has, Judaic-wise, alsorejected both the natural and the written law; and he is ignorant of the law of grace which confers deification onthose who are obedient to it. He who understands the written law in a literal manner does not nourish his soulwith the virtues. He who does not grasp the inner principles of created beings fails to feast his intellect on themanifold wisdom of God. And he who is ignorant of the great mystery of the new grace does not rejoice in thehope of future deification. Thus failure to contemplate the written law spiritually results in a dearth of the divinewisdom to be apprehended in the natural law; and

this in its turn is followed by a complete ignorance of thedeification given by grace according to the new mystery.

32. Every intellect endowed by the grace of Christ with discriminative and penetrating vision, always desires saidseeks the face of the Lord. The face of the Lord is true contemplation and Spiritual knowledge of divine thingsattained through virtue. When one seeks this contemplation and knowledge one learns the cause of one'sdestitution and dearth. For just as the face is the distinctive feature of each person, so spiritual knowledge Is th6special characteristic of what is divine. He who seeks such knowledge is said to seek the face of the Lord. Butthe person who has become carnal through bloody sacrifices performed in accordance with the letter of the Lawpossesses the ignorance which he desires: for he accepts commandments

only for the pleasure they give to the flesh and he confines his perception literally to the material sense of the writtenword.

33. In the case of the person who confines himself to a literal observance of the Law, the matter which, heengenders is the act of sin that he commits:, while the form that he devises in a materialistic fashion is theintellect's assent to the sensual pleasures that attract him to the act of sin. He who understands Scripture in aspiritual way puts to death both the act of sin, which corresponds to matter, and the assent to it, whichcorresponds to form: and he also puts to death the misuse of the senses for the sake of pleasure. He does this bymeans of thoughts that by nature pertain to higher levels of contemplation.

34. Once the external observance of the letter of the Law has been superseded, together with the ignorance that goeswith it, it is then possible to put an end to the matter and form of which we have been speaking, as well as to thefive ways of misusing the five senses with regard to matter and form - and by this I mean the impassioned andunnatural association of the senses with sensible things subject to time and change. The spiritual law, ormtellect, destroys this

association by means of the higher principles and thoughts which are found in naturalcontemplation. In this way the intellect, when it has attained the heights of the law of spiritual contemplation,destroys man's all-pervasive subjection, established through the symbols of temporal things, to sense-perceptionand to the outward form of things.

35. Without natural contemplation no one can appreciate the disparity between the symbols through which the Law

is expressed and the divine realities which these symbols represent. Further, if through such contemplation aman has not first discerned this disparity and, denying his sense-perception all access to the hidden realm ofdivine and intelligible realities, does not long to penetrate with his intellect into its beauty, he cannot beliberated completely from the external diversity to be found in the symbols. So long as he cleaves to the letter,his inner hunger for spiritual knowledge will not be satisfied; for he has condemned himself like the wilyserpent to feed on the earth - that is. on the outward or literal form - of Scripture (cf Gen. 3:14), and does not,as a true disciple of Christ, feed on heaven - that is, on the spirit and soul of Scripture, in other words, oncelestial and angelic bread. I mean that he does

not feed through Christ on the spiritual contemplation and knowledge of the Scriptures, which God givesunstintingly to those who love Him, in accordance with the text: 'He gave them the bread of heaven: man ate thefood of angels' (Ps. 78:24-25. LXX).

36. Interpretation of the outward form of Scripture according to the norms of: sense-perception must be superseded,for it clearly promotes the passions as well as proclivity towards what is temporal and transient. That is to say,we must destroy the impassioned activity of the senses with regard to sensible objects, as if destroying thechildren and grandchildren of Saul (cf 2 Sam. 21:1-9); and we must do this by ascending to the heights ofnatural contemplation through a

mystical interpretation of divine utterances, if in any way we desire to be filledwith divine grace.

37. When the Law is understood only according to the letter, it is hostile to the truth, as the Jews were, and as isanyone else who possesses their mentality. For such a person limits the Law's power merely to the letter, anddoes not advance to natural contemplation, which reveals the spiritual knowledge hidden mystically in theletter; for this contemplation mediates between figurative representations of the truth and the truth itself, andleads its adepts away from the first and towards the second. On the contrary, he rejects natural contemplationaltogether and so excludes himself from initiation into divine realities. Those who diligently aspire to a vision ofthese realities must therefore destroy the outward and, evanescent interpretation of the Law, Subject to time andchange; and they must do this by means of natural contemplation, having ascended to the heights of spiritualknowledge.

38. A man totally obliterates the outward or literal sense of Scripture when through the practice of natural

contemplation he destroys his soul's pleasure-provoked and body-indulging subjection - promoted by thewritten Law - to the restless and evanescent world of materiality. In this way he slays, as though it were Saul'schildren and grandchildren, his earth-bound understanding of the Law. At the same time, through this natural,contemplation on the heights of spiritual knowledge, he openly confesses his error of previously interpreting theLaw according to its outward form. For the text, 'to hang them before the Lord' (cf 2 Sam. 21:9), may beunderstood to mean this: to bring into the light by means of spiritual knowledge his preoccupation with theletter of the Law

and the prejudice from which he suffers as a result. This is to show that, thanks to contemplation, the letter of theLaw has been killed by spiritual knowledge.

39. 'The letter kills." says Scripture, 'but the Spirit gives life' (2 Cor. 3:6). Consequently, the letter whose nature itis to kill must be killed by the life-giving Spirit. For what is material in the Law and what is divine - namely, theletter and the Spirit - cannot coexist, nor can what destroys life be reconciled with that which by nature bestowslife.

40. The Spirit bestows life, the letter destroys it. Thus the letter cannot function at the same time as the Spirit, justas what gives life cannot coexist with what destroys life and the prejudice from which he suffers as a result.This is to show that, thanks to contemplation, the letter of the Law has been killed by spiritual knowledge.

41. Circumcision, in its mystical sense, is the complete cutting away of the intellect's impassioned attachment to allthat comes into being in a contingent manner. Viewing things on the natural level, we recognize that theremoval of an attribute naturally bestowed by God does not produce perfection. For nature does not bring aboutperfection when it is mutilated by human ingenuity, or when through over-subtlety men deprive it of somethingconferred on it by God at creation. Otherwise we would be attributing to human ingenuity more power toestablish a perfect order of things than to God, and to an ingenious mutilation of nature the ability to make goodshortcomings in God's creation. But if we understand circumcision figuratively, we learn that we are spirituallyto circumcise the impassioned disposition of our soul. In this way our will, having freed the intellect from itsimpassioned subjection to the law that rules the birth of contingent things, is brought into harmony with nature.

42. Uncircumcision is natural. Everything that is natural is the work of divine creation and is excellent: 'And Godsaw everything that He had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Gen. 1:31). But the Law, by demanding onthe grounds of uncleanness that the foreskin should be cutaway by circumcision (cf. Gen. 17:10-14), presentsGod as amending His own work through human skill. This is a most blasphemous way of looking at things. He,then, who interprets the symbols whereby the Law is expressed in the light of knowledge attained throughnatural contemplation, knows that God does not set nature aright by means of human skill, but bids us cir-cumcise the passible aspect of the soul so as to make it obedient to

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the mtelligence. This is indicated figuratively in terms of the body, and means that we are to excise the flaws fromour will by means of spiritual knowledge acquired through the courageous practice of the virtues. The circumcismgpriest signifies spiritual knowledge, and the knife he uses is the courageous practice of the virtues, which cuts awaythe passions. When the. Spirit triumphs over the letter, the tradition of the Law is abolished.

43. The Sabbath (cf. Exod. 16:23; 20:10) signifies rest from the passions, and from the intellect's gravitationtowards the nature of created beings. It signifies the total quiescence of the passions, a complete cessation of theintellect's gravitation towards created things, and its total entry into the divine. He who has attained this state -so far as God permits - by means of virtue and spiritual knowledge, must not ponder on any material thing at allfor, like sticks (cf. Num. 15:32), such things excite the passions; and he must not call to mind any naturalprinciple whatsoever. Otherwise, like the pagans, we will be affirming that God delights in the passions or iscommensurate with nature. Perfect silence alone proclaims Him, and total and transcendent unknowing bringsus into His presence.

44. A crown of goodness (cf. Ps. 65:11) is a pure faith, adorned with eloquent doctrine, and with spiritual principlesand intellections, as if with precious stones, and set as it were on the head of the devout intellect. Or rather, acrown of goodness is the Logos of God Himself, who encircles the intellect as if it were a head, protecting itwith manifold forms of providence and judgment - that is, with mastery of the passions that lie within our con-trol and with patient endurance of those we suffer against our will; and who makes this same intellect morebeautiful by enabling it to participate in the grace of deification.

45. In the preceding passage it is said that self-control is a work of God's providence, because it purifies the

passions which he within the control of the will. It is also said that patient endurance is a work of God'sjudgment, because it enables us to resist those trials we suffer against our will. Moreover, being a token ofpractical philosophy, such

endurance brings those who have been enslaved in an Egypt of sin across to therealm of virtue.

46. God did not order the Sabbath, the new moons and the feasts to be honored because He wanted men to honorthe days

themselves: this would have been tantamount to decreeing by the Law that men should worship creation rather thanthe Creator (cf Rom. 1:25), and should regard the days as holy in themselves and therefore to be venerated. On thecontrary. He indicated that He Himself was to be honored symbolically through the days. For He is the Sabbath, asthe soul's repose after its exertions in the flesh, and as the cessation of its sufferings in the cause of righteousness.He is the Passover, as the liberator of those held in the bitter slavery of sin. He is the Pentecost, as the origin andconsummation of all created beings, and as the principle through which all things by nature exist. Thus the Lawdestroys those who apprehend it in a literal or outward way, leading them to worship creation rather than theCreator, and to regard as holy in themselves things that were brought into existence for man's sake; for they remainignorant of Him on whose account they were created.

47. The world is a finite place and possesses but limited stability. Time is circumscribed movement. It follows thatthe movement of living things within time is subject to change. When nature passes beyond place and time,actively "and inwardly - that is, when it passes beyond those things which always accompany created being,namely, a limited state of stability and limited movement - it is united directly with pro\'idence, and finds inprovidence a principle which is by nature simple, stable, without limitation and thus completely withoutmovement.

48. Since nature exists in the world in a temporal mode, its movement is subject to change because of the world'slimited stability and its liability to alteration and corruption through the passing of time. When nature has cometo exist in God through the essential unity of Him m whom it was created, it will possess an

ever-movingstability and a stable and changeless form of movement generated eternally round that which is one, unique andalways the same. It has been said that this state is a direct and permanent grounding in the first cause of created

beings.

49. The mystery of Pentecost is the direct union with providence of those things that are in its care. It is the union ofnature with its principle, the Logos, under the guidance of providence: and in this union there is not the slightesttrace of time or generation. Again,

the Logos is our trumpet (ct. Lev. 23:24), summoning us with divine and hidden knowledge. He is our propitiation(cf. Lev. 25: 9) since He expiates our offenses in His own person by becoming like us, and divinizes our sinfulnature by the gift: of grace through the Spirit. He is our booth or tabernacle (cf. Lev. 23:42), since He is therealization of that immutability with which our inner being, conformed to God, is concentrated on the divine, andalso the securing bond of our transformation into an immortal state.

50. If God rejoiced simply in bloody sacrifices, this would imply that He is governed by passion and wishes thosewho offer sacrifice to Him to value the passions; for the sincere worshipper gladly rejoices in the same things asdoes the God whom he worships. But the sacrifices of which Scripture speaks are rather the slaughter of thepassions and the offering up of our natural powers. Of these powers, the ram typifies the intelligence (cf. Lev.23:42), the bull the mcensive power (cf. Exod. 29:36), and the goat represents desire (cf Num. 15:27).

51. By spiritual sacrifices is meant not only the putting to death of the passions, slaughtered by 'the sword of theSpirit, which is the word of God' (Eph. 6:17), and the deliberate emptying out of all life in the flesh, as if itwere blood; the term also signifies the offering up of the moral state we have gained through the practice of thevirtues, together with all our natural powers, which we dedicate

and offer to God as whole burnt sacrifices, to beconsumed by the fire of grace in the Spirit, so that they are filled with divine power.

52. When a materialistic understanding of Scripture dominates the soul, it leads the soul to reject natural principlesby misusing its natural powers: and so long as this understanding retains its hold it expels, pursues and destroysall such principles and droughts. For it limits the Law to the flesh alone, and honors the shameful passions asdivine. But natural thoughts, made fearless through the law of the Spirit, kill the passions at a stroke.

53. As soon as anyone practices the virtues with true intelligence, he acquires a spiritual understanding of Scripture.

He worships God actively in the new way of the Spirit through the higher forms of contemplation, and not inthe old way of the written, code (cf Rom. 7:6), which makes man interpret the Law in an outward and sensualmanner and, Judaic-like, fosters the passions and encourages sm.

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54. As soon as a person stops interpreting Scripture in an outward and sensual manner, his intellect reverts to itsnatural spiritual state: he accomplishes spiritedly what the Jews performed in a purely external and physicalmanner, thereby provoking God's anger.

55. Every intellect caught up by God cuts off simultaneously both the energy of the passions and the uncouth jostleof thoughts. In addition to this it also puts an end to the licentious misuse of the senses. For the passions,brought triumphantly into subjection by the higher forms of contemplation, are destroyed by the sublime visionof nature.

56. The power of sin - or in other words, the will of the flesh - is destroyed by the grace of holy baptism, and byactive obedience to God's commandments. Such obedience destroys the power of sin with the sword of theSpirit (cf. Eph.

6:17), that is, with the revelation of divine knowledge in the Spirit; for obedience secretly criesto the passion of sin as Samuel cried to Agag: 'As your sword has made women childless, so today shall yourmother be childless among women" (1 Sam. 15:33).

57. Using the mellow thought of pleasure as if it were a sword, the passion of gluttony makes many virtueschildless. By means of dissipation it kills the seeds of self-restraint; through greed it corrupts the equity ofjustice; with self-love it severs the natural bond of compassion, m short, the passion of gluttony destroys allvirtue's offspring.

58. The passion of gluttony kills all the divine offspring of the virtues. But that passion itself is killed through thespiritual knowledge acquired by the grace of faith and by obedience to the divine commandments.

59. Our Lord is truly a light to the Gentiles (cf. Isa. 49:6; Luke 2:32): through true knowledge He opens the eyes oftheir mind, closed as they have been by the darkness of ignorance. Moreover, through His divine conduct Hehas made Himself a noble example of virtue to the faithful, becoming their model and pattern. Looking to Him

as the author of our salvation, we attain the virtues by imitating Him in our own conduct, so far as this ispossible for us.

60. Anyone who hates a man through envy, and maliciously slanders him because he is stronger in the struggle forvirtue and richer in spiritual knowledge, is choked like Saul by an evil spirit.

(cf 1 Sam. 16:14): he cannot bear to see someone better than himself enjoying the glory that comes through virtueand spiritual knowledge. And he rages all the more because he cannot actually kill this good man (cf 1 Sam, 18:10-11). In addition, he often bitterly banishes the beloved Jonathan from his presence (cf. 1

Sam. 19:4-5; 20: 30-32) -that is, he suppresses the innate judgment of his conscience, which rebukes his unjust hatred and from a love of truthrecounts the achievements of the man whom he hates.

61. Let us, too, beseech the noetic David to make our intellect, frenzied by material things, resonant with the lyre ofspiritual contemplation and knowledge, and to drive out the evil spirit of material inconstancy that dominatesthe world of the senses (cf. 1 Sam. 16:23). In this way we may be able to understand the Law spiritually andfind the divine principle hidden mystically within it, so that it becomes for us a lasting source of eternal life.

62. Every lover of salvation is totally committed either to the practice of the virtues or to the contemplative life. Forwithout virtue and spiritual knowledge no one can attain salvation in any way whatsoever. For virtue controlsthe body's impulses, skillfully curbing with sound thoughts its gravitation towards unnatural conduct; while bymeans of contemplation one inwardly lays hold of what has been rightly conceived and intelligently assessed.

63. Since apprehension is intellective, and what is apprehended is intelligible, what is apprehended is, so to speak,the nourishment and substance of that which apprehends. Thus when God is apprehended by incorporeal beings- who are themselves intellects - and becomes intelligible to them to the degree to which they come intocommunion with Him, He illumines them from within, their intellects both apprehending Him and beingnourished by Him.

64. The intelligible is one thing and the intellective is another, the first in some sense, as we have already indicated,nourishing the second. For what is apprehended - the intelligible - is superior and conceptually prior to that

which apprehends, which is intellective. Beings that apprehend such superior intelligibles with the intellect areintellective. What is apprehended is intelligible, and it is this that nourishes the intellective - or, in other words,nourishes that which apprehends.

65. An effect enshrines, as far as possible, the image of its cause. All created things are effects, while what hasbrought them into

bemg is their cause. But there is no exact resemblance between cause and effect.

66. Although effects enshrine, so far as possible, the images of their causes, there is no exact resemblance betweenthe two, since causes surpass and transcend effects with regard to their mode of origin. For what pertains: toeffects pre-exists superlatively and essentially in their causes.

67. Effects comprise all created things in heaven and on earth, while the causes that have brought them into beingare the three Persons of the Holy Trinity. It is therefore clear that there can be no exact resemblance between thetwo.

68. Our intellect possesses the power of apprehension through which it perceives intelligible realities: it alsopossesses the capacity for a union that transcends its nature and that unites it with what is beyond its naturalscope. It is through this union that divine realities are apprehended, not by means of our own natural capacities,but by virtue of the fact that we entirely transcend ourselves and belong entirely to God. It is better to belong toGod than to ourselves: for it is on those who belong to God that divine gifts are bestowed.

69. When the intellect wants to apprehend something, it descends from its own level to the level of intellection. Forintellections are inferior to the subject that apprehends, since they are the means through which apprehensionand understanding take place: and they disperse and divide the intellect's unity. The intellect is simple andintegral, while intellections are multiple and dispersive: they are, so to speak, the forms of the intellect. For thisreason intellective subjects - beings endowed with intellect - are inferior to intelligible realities that are theobjects of apprehension. It is by virtue of its unity that the intellect reaches out to what is beyond its naturalscope and attains the contemplation of God. This it does by transcending all that belongs to the sensible and

intelligible worlds, and even its own activity; for only thus may it receive the ray of divine knowledge.

70. An intellective being that acts intellectively in accordance with its own principle naturally apprehends with itsintellect. Moreover it will love what it apprehends and so in a passive manner, under the influence of the eroticimpulse,

it will be drawn out of

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itself towards that which it loves; and this impulse will grow continually more urgent and intense. In this way it willnot rest until it is entirely immersed in the total reality of what it loves, wholly and willingly encompassed by thewholeness of that reality, welcoming its saving embrace, and completely conformed to that which embraces it. Somuch will this be the case that it will now wish to be recognized not from itself but; from what embraces it, like airmade luminous by light or iron penetrated through and through by fire, or something else of this kind.

71. The relationship between the intellective faculty and intelligible realities, and between the sensory faculties andsensible realities, is in each case extremely close. Since man is constituted of soul and sentient body, he islimited and defined and he himself imposes limits and makes definitions by virtue of the natural and distinctivereciprocity that exists between himself and these two aspects of creation. As a compound of soul and body he islimited essentially by intelligible and sensible realities, while at the same time he himself defines these realitiesthrough his capacity to apprehend intellectually and to perceive with his senses. God, on the other hand, existssimply and without limitation beyond all created realities, whether comprehending or comprehended, for He hasabsolutely no relationship with anything at all.

72. Every forbidden sensual pleasure comes into being as a result of passion and through the perception of somesensible object. For sensual pleasure is nothing other than the form of sensation created in the sentient facultyby some sensible object, or else the mode of sensitive activity when this is set in motion by desire that is con-trary to the intelligence. For when desire combines with the senses, it is changed into pleasure, itself contriving.the form the pleasure takes. And when the senses are stimulated' by desire, they produce pleasure, takingadvantage of the sensible object The saints recognize that the soul assumes an earthly form when, contrary tonature, it is impelled towards material things by means of the

flesh; consequently they resolve to redirect theirimpulses in accordance with nature towards God by means of the soul, and to adapt their flesh to Him, adorningit as far as possible with images of the divine through the practice of the virtues.

73. The saints in their nobility pass through this present age of trials by acting unfailingly in accordance withnature. Once their

intellect has grasped the simple essences of created things, they unite their senses to it by means of the intelligence;then when the intellect has been completely liberated from all nnpulsion toward created things, and is at rest evenwith its own natural activity, they offer it to God. Wholly united with God in this way, they are totally immingledthrough the spirit with the whole God, since they have put on the whole image of the heavenly (cf. 1 Cor. 15:49) - sofar as human beings can do this - and have consecrated themselves to God, drawing the divine image to themselves,if it be permitted to speak thus, as much as being drawn by it.

74. We are told that God and man are exemplars of each other. Man's ability to deify himself through love forGod's sake is correlative with God's becoming man through compassion for man's sake. And man'smanifestation through the virtues of the God who is by nature invisible is correlative with the degree to whichhis intellect is seized by God and imbued with spiritual knowledge.

75. The person who has mortified the earthly aspects of himself (cf Col. 3:5), thoroughly extinguishing the will ofthe flesh within him and repudiating the attachment to it which splits asunder the love we owe to God alone;who has disowned all the modalities of the flesh and the world for the sake of divine grace, so as to be able tosay with Paul the apostle, 'What can separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom. 8:35) - such a person hasbecome, like Melchisedec, 'without father, without mother, without descent' (Heb. 7:3). For, because of theunion with the Spirit that has taken place withm him, he cannot now be

dominated by flesh or by nature.

76. I do not think that the end of this present life is rightly called death. More accurately, it is deliverance fromdeath, separation from corruption, liberation from slavery. Cessation of turbulence, destruction of wars,dispelling of darkness, rest from suffering, calming of turmoil, eclipsing of shame, escape from passions and, tosum up, the termination of all evils. The saints who have achieved these things through voluntary mortificationlive as strangers and pilgrims in this life (cf Heb. 11:13), fighting bravely against the world and the body andthe assaults stemming from them. And, having stifled the deceit which both of these engender because of the

close connection existing between the senses and sensible objects, they keep the dignity of their soulunenslaved.

77. Nature itself gives no small token of the knowledge of

providence planted naturally within us whenever it urges us instinctively towards God through prayer in times ofsudden crisis, and makes us seek salvation from Him. For when we are suddenly overtaken by violent events, beforethinking of anything else we involuntarily call upon God. It is as if providence itself, without any conscious thoughton our part, were drawing us to itself, outstripping the speed of our noetic faculty and showing us that divine help isstronger than anything else. Nature would not lead us purposelessly to what does not naturally exist. It is clear toeveryone that whatever is a natural consequence of something demonstrates its own authenticity with the force oftruth.

78. Some things are good and others are bad, and these belong either to the present or to the future. A good which isexpected in the future is called desire, and one which is possessed in the present is called pleasure. Conversely,an evil which is expected in the future is called fear, and one which is experienced in the present is calleddistress. Consequently, with regard to good things, whether

really good or only thought to be so, pleasure anddesire both exist and are to be observed; and the same may be said of distress and fear where evil things areconcerned. Desire when fulfilled produces pleasure, and when frustrated results in distress.

79. It is said that distress is of its very nature evil. For although a man engaged in the practice of the virtues grievesover the evils that befall others, he is compassionate not primarily by deliberate choice but as a consequence ofwhatever misfortune it is that occurs. A contemplative, on the other hand, remains dispassionate in the face ofsuch evils, since he has united himself with God and is detached from all that happens in this present life.

80. Since all the saints have truly grasped the divine and infallible Logos, they pass through this present age withoutprinting their soul's footsteps on any of the delights which are to be found in it. For they have rightly made theirintellect receptive to the loftiest principles concerning God accessible to man, the principles of goodness and

love. They have learnt that God, moved by these principles, has endowed created things with being and grantedthem well-being as a gift of grace. Yet perhaps when referring to God, who alone is unmoved, we should speaknot of movement but of will; for it is God's will that moves all things, brings all things into existence, sustainsthem, yet is never moved in any way whatsoever.

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81. Smce the soul is an intellective and intelligent substance, it both apprehends with its intellect and uses itsintelligence. The intellect is its potentiality, the act of intellection its dynamic, and the intellectual concept orconceptual image its actualization. For the intellectual concept marks the completion of the act of intellection asregards both the intellective subject and the object intellectually apprehended: it intervenes between the two anddetermines their relation to each other. For when' the soul apprehends, its act of intellection stops once theobject of that act has been grasped: what has truly been apprehended once and for all

no longer calls forth thepotentiality of the soul to apprehend it. In this way the formation of an intellectual concept brings the act ofintellection to an end.

82. Just as ignorance divides those who are deluded, so the presence of spiritual light draws together and unitesthose whom it enlightens. It makes them perfect and brings them back to what really exists; converting themfrom a multiplicity of opinions it unites their varied points of view - or, more accurately, their fantasies - intoone simple, true and pure spiritual knowledge, and fills them with a single unifying light.

83. The beautiful is identical with the good, for all things seek the beautiful and good at every opportunity, andthere is no being which does not participate in them. They extend to all that is, being what is truly admirable,sought for, desired, pleasing, chosen and loved. Observe how the divine force of love - the erotic power pre-existing in the good - has given birth to the same blessed force within us, through which we long for thebeautiful and good in accordance with the words, "I became a lover of her beauty' (Wisd. 8:2), and 'Love herand she will sustain you; fortify her and she will exalt you' (Prov. 4: 6, 8).

84. Theologians call the divine sometimes an erotic force, sometimes love, sometimes that which is intenselylonged for and loved. Consequently, as an erotic force and as love, the divine itself is subject to movement; andas that which is intensely longed for and loved it moves towards itself everything that is receptive of this forceand love. To express this more clearly; the divine itself is subject to movement since it produces an inward stateof intense

longing and love in those receptive to them; and it moves others since by nature it attracts the desire of those whoare drawn: to-wards it. In other words, it moves others and itself moves since it thirsts to be thirsted for, longs to belonged for, and loves to be loved.

85. The divine erotic force also produces ecstasy, compelling those who love to

belong not to themselves but tothose whom they love. This is shown by superior beings through their care of inferiors, by those of equaldignity through their mutual union, and by lower beings through their divine conversion towards those that arehighest in rank. It was in consequence of this that St Paul, possessed as he was by this divine erotic force andpartaking of its ecstatic power, was inspired to say: "1 no longer live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Heuttered these words as a true lover and, as he himself says, as one who has gone out from himself to God (cf 2Cor. 5:13), not living his own life but that of the beloved, because of his fervent love for Him.

86. One must also in the name of truth be bold enough to affirm that the Cause of all things, through the beauty,goodness and profusion of His intense love for everything, goes out of Himself in His providential care for thewhole of creation. By means of the supra-essential power of ecstasy, and spell-bound as it were by goodness,love and longing. He relinquishes His utter transcendence in order to dwell in all things while yet remaining-within Himself Hence those skilled in divine matters call Him a zealous and exemplary lover, because of theintensity of His blessed longing for all things and because He rouses others to imitate His own intense desire,revealing Himself as their exemplar; for in Him what is desirable is worthy of emulation, and He deserves to beimitated by the beings under His care.

87. God is said to be the originator and begetter of love and the erotic force. For He externalized them from withinHimself, that is. He brought them forth into the world of created things. This is why Scripture says that "God islove' (1 John 4:16), and elsewhere that He is 'sweetness and desire" (cf. Song of Songs 5:16. LXX), whichsignifies the erotic force. For what is worthy of love and truly desirable is God Himself. Because loving desireis poured out from Him, He Himself, as its begetter, is said to be in movement, while because He is what istruly longed for, loved, desired and chosen.

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He stirs into motion the things that turn towards Him, and which possess the

power of desiring each in the degreeappropriate it.

You should understand that God stimulates and allures in order to bring about an erotic union in the Spirit; thatis to say. He is the go-between in this union, the one who brings the parties together, in order that He may bedesired and loved by His creatures. God stimulates in that He impels each being, in accordance with its ownprinciple, to return to Him. Even though the word "allurement' signifies something impure to the profane, hereit stands for the mediation which effects the union with God.

89. The erotic impulsion of the Good, that pre-exists in the Good, is simple and self-moving; it proceeds from theGood, and returns again to the Good, since it is without end or beginning. This is why we always desire thedivine and union with the divine. For loving union with God surpasses and excels all other unions.

90. We should regard the erotic force, whether divine, angelic, noetic, psychic or physical, as a unifymg andcomminglmg power. It impels superior bemgs to care for .those below them, beings of equal dignity to act withreciprocity, and, finally, inferior beings, to return to those that are greater and more excellent than they.

91. Spiritual knowledge unites knower and known, while ignorance is always a cause of change and self-division inthe ignorant. Hence nothing, according to sacred Scripture, will shift him who truly believes from the ground ofhis true faith, in which resides the permanence of his immutable and unchanging identity. For he who has beenunited with the truth has the assurance that all is well with him, even though most people rebuke him for beingout of his mind. For without their being aware he has moved from delusion to the truth of real faith; and heknows for sure that he is not deranged, as they say, but that through truth - simple and always immutably thesame - he has been liberated from the fluctuating and fickle turmoil of the manifold forms of illusion.

92. The saints are full of goodness, compassion, kindliness and mercy. They manifest the same love for the wholehuman race. Because of this they hold fast throughout their lives to the highest of all blessings, humility, thatconserves, other blessings and destroys their opposites. Thus they become totally immune to vexing trials andtemptations, whether those due to ourselves and subject to our

volition, or net from ourselves and beyond our control. They wither the attacks of the first type through self-control,and repel the assaults of the second type with patient endurance.

93. The perfect practice of virtue is produced by true faith and genuine fear of God. Unerring natural contemplation- in the course of the spiritual ascent is produced by a sure hope and a sound understanding. Deification throughassumption into the divine is produced by perfect love and an intellect voluntarily blinded, because of itstranscendent state, to created things.

94. The function of practical philosophy is to purify the intellect of every impassioned fantasy. The function ofnatural contemplation is to initiate the intellect into the true knowledge that is found in created things andaccording to which they possess existence. The function of mystical theology is by grace to make the intellectlike God and equal to Him - as far as this is possible - so that it becomes totally unaware, because of itstranscendent state, of anything that is sequent to God.

95. Ether, or the fiery element, in the world of the senses corresponds in the world of the mind to understanding - astate that illumines and manifests the spiritual principles particular to each created being, revealing throughthese principles tike Cause that is present in them all, and drawing out the soul's desire for the divine. Air in theworld of the senses corresponds in the world of the mind to courage - a state that quickens, sustains andactivates this innate life of the spirit, and invigorates the soul's ceaseless aspiration for the divine. Water in theworld of the senses corresponds in the world of the mind to self-restraint - a state that produces a vitalizingfecundity in the spirit and generates an ever-resurgent erotic enchantment attracting the soul to the divine. Earthin the world of the senses corresponds in the world of the mind to justice - a state that begets all the innerprinciples of created things according to their kind, that in spirit shares out the gifts of life to each thing m anequitable way, and that is by its own free choice rooted and established immovably in beauty and goodness.

96. When the flesh flourishes and burgeons, the soul is afflicted and darkened by

the passions, because the state ofvirtue and the illumination of spiritual knowledge withdraw. Conversely, when the soul is fortified and maderesplendent with the divine beauty of the virtues and with the illumination of spiritual knowledge, the

outer man is weakened, because the flesh loses its natural vigor through the indwelling of the Logos.

97. Created man cannot become a son of God and god by grace through deification, unless he is first through hisown free choice begotten m the Spirit by means of the self-loving and independent power dwelling naturallywithin him. T'he first man neglected this divinizing, divine and immaterial birth by choosing what is manifestand delectable to the senses in preference to the spiritual blessings that were as yet unrevealed. In this way hefittingly condemned himself to a bodily generation that is without choice, material and subject to death.

98. In his present state man acts either to satisfy the uncontrolled fantasies of passions deceitfully provoked for thesake of self-indulgence, or to perform work forced on him by some necessity, or in order to discover the naturallaws of nature. In the beginning none of these things constrained man in this way, for he was above all things.That indeed is how it was right for the first man to be: not in the least distracted by anything below him, oraround him, or over against him, and requiring only one thing for his perfection - an indomitable striving,backed by all the strength of his love, towards the God above him.

99. Nothing that had to be learnt interposed itself between God and the first man, impeding the free relationship thatwas to be sealed by love through his striving towards God. Being dispassionate by grace, he was not subject tothe delusory fantasies of passions provoked by the desire for sensual pleasure. Being self-sufficient, he was freefrom needs forcing him to engage in some kind of work. Being wise, he possessed a spiritual knowledge thatmade him superior to the study of nature.

100. God, who created all nature with wisdom and secretly planted in each intelligent being knowledge of Himself asits first power, like a munificent Lord gave also to us men a natural desire and longing for Him, combining it ina natural way with the power of our intelligence. Using our intelligence, we struggle so as to learn withtranquility and without going astray how to realize this natural desire. Impelled by it we are led to search out thetruth, wisdom and order manifest harmoniously in all creation, aspiring through them to attain Him by whosegrace we received the desire.

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A Short InterpretationAddressed to a Devout Christian

I have. Sir, in receiving your inspiring letters, received you in your own person. Indeed, in spirit you are alwayspresent and cannot possibly be absent. Bat, following God's example, you have in your goodness also takenadvantage of the opportunity God has given you to communicate with your servants. I have greatly admired yourself-abasement, and have tempered my fear of you with affection, and from both have formed a love based onrespect and goodwill. I have combined the two m case fear, stripped of affection, should turn into hatred, oraffection, deprived of fear, should turn into over-familiarity. In this way love becomes an inward law of tenderness,assimilating everything naturally akin to It, mastering hatred through goodwill, and over-familiarity through respect.

David the psalmist says, 'Fear of the Lord is pure, and endures for ever' (Ps. 19:9A because he knows that of allthings fear is best able to preserve divine love. Such a fear is, he realizes, very different from the fear of beingpunished for crimes. This second type of fear is indeed ousted and destroyed by love, as John the Evangelist makesclear when he writes, "Love casts out fear' (1 John 4:18). But the fear-David is talking about is a natural expressionof the law of true tenderness: and it is through this fear that the saints always keep intact the rule and practice oflove, both for God and for each other.

Thus, as have said, I too have tempered my fear of you. Sir, with affection and have maintained this law of love untilnow. Hitherto I have been held back from writing through respect, because I did not want to open the door to over-

familiarity; but now I have been

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impelled to write through goodwill, lest my failure to do so should be construed as hatred. And so, as requested, Iwrite, not what I thmk - for, as Scripture says, 'men's thoughts are pathetic" (Wisd. 9:14) - but what God wills andgrants by grace so that good may come of it; for 'the Lord's counsel stands for ever,' says David, 'and the thoughtsof His heart from generation to generation' (Ps. 33:11). Perhaps the, counsel of God the Father to which David hererefers is the unfathomable self-emptying of the only-begotten Son which He brought about for the deification of our

nature, and by which He has set a hmit to the ages; and perhaps the thoughts of His heart are the principles ofprovidence and judgment by which He wisely orders our present and future life as if they were separate generations,assigning to each its appropriate mode of activity.

If the purpose of the divine counsel is the deification of our nature, and the aim of divine thoughts is to supply theprerequisites of our life, it follows that we should both know and carry into effect the power of the Lord's Prayer,and write about it in the proper way. And since you. Sir, in writing to me your servant have been inspired by God tomention this prayer in particular, it is necessarily the subject of my own words as well; hence I beseech the Lord,who has taught us this prayer, to open my intellect so that it may grasp the mysteries contained in it, and to give mewords equal to the task of elucidating what I have understood. For hidden within a limited compass this prayercontains the whole purpose and aim of which we have just spoken; or, rather, it openly proclaims this purpose andaim to those whose intellects are strong enough to perceive them. The prayer includes petitions for everything thatthe divine Logos effected through His self-emptying in the incarnation, and it teaches us to strive for those blessingsof which the true provider is God the Father alone through the natural mediation of the Son in the Holy Spirit. Forthe Lord Jesus is mediator between God and men, as the divine apostle says (cf. 1 Tim; 2:5), since He makes theunknown Father manifest to men through the flesh, and gives those who have been reconciled to Him access to theFather through the Holy Spirit (cf. Eph. 2:18). It was on their behalf and for their sake that without changing Hebecame man, and is now the

author and teacher of so many and such great new mysteries as yet beyond ourunderstanding.

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Of these mysteries that He has granted to men in His boundless generosity, seven are of more general significance;and it is these whose power, as I have said, lies hidden within the Lord's Prayer/ These seven are theology,adoption as sons by grace, equality with the angels, participation in eternal life, the restoration of human naturewhen it is reconciled dispassionately with itself, the abolition of the law of sin, and the destruction of the tyrannythat holds us in its power through the deceit of the evil one.

Let us examine the truth of what we have said. Theology is taught us by the incarnate Logos of God, since Hereveals in Himself the Father and the Holy Spirit. For the whole of the Father and the whole of the Holy Spirit werepresent essentially and perfectly in the whole of the incarnate Son. They themselves did not become incarnate, butthe Father approved and the Spirit co-operated when the Son Himself effected- His incarnation. At the incarnationthe Logos preserved His intellect and His life unimpaired: except by the Father and the Spirit He was notcomprehended in essence by any other being whatsoever, but in His love for men was united hypostatically with theflesh.

The Logos bestows adoption on us when He grants us that birth and deification which, transcending nature, comes

by grace from above through the Spirit, The guarding and preservation of this in God depends on the resolve ofthose thus bom: on their sincere acceptance of the grace bestowed on them and, through the practice of thecommandments, on their cuhivation of the beauty given to them by grace. Moreover, by emptying themselves of thepassions they lay hold of the divine to the same degree as that to which, deliberately emptying Himself of His ownsublime glory, the Logos of God truly became man.

The Logos has made men equal to the angels. Not only did He 'make peace through the blood of His Cross . ..between things on earth and things in heaven"

(Col. 1:20), and reduce to impotence the hostile powers that fill m theintermediary region between heaven and earth, thereby making the festal assembly of earthly and heavenly powers asingle gathering for His distribution of divme gifts, with humankind joining joyfully with the powers on high munanimous praise of God's glory; but also, after fulfilling the divine purpose undertaken on our behalf, when He wastaken up with the body which He had assumed. He united heaven and earth in Himself,

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joined what is sensible with what is intelligible, and revealed creation as a single whole whose extremes are boundtogether through virtue and through knowledge of their first Cause. He shows, I think, through what He hasaccomplished mystically, that the Logos unites what is separated and that alienation from the Logos divides what isunited. Let us learn, then, to strive after the Logos through the practice of the virtues, so that we may be united notonly with the angels through virtue, but also with God in spiritual knowledge through detachment from createdthings.

The Logos enables us to participate in divine life by making Himself our food, in a manner understood by Himselfand by those who have received from Him a noetic perception of this kind. It is by tasting this food that they becometruly aware that the Lord is full of virtue (cf Ps. 34:8). For He transmutes with divinity those who eat it, bringingabout their deification, since He is the bread of life and of power in both name and reality.

He restores human nature to itself. First, He became man and kept His will dispassionate and free from rebellionagainst nature, so that it did not waver in the slightest from its own natural movement even with regard to those whocrucified Him: on the contrary, it chose death for their sake instead of life, thereby demonstrating the voluntarycharacter of His passion, rooted as it is in His love for humankind. Second, having nailed to the Cross the record ofour sins (cf. Col. 2:14), He abolished the enmity which led nature to wage an implacable war against itself; and-havmg summoned those far off and those near at hand - that is, those under the Law and those outside it - and

having broken down the obstructive partition-waU - that is, having explained the law of the commandments in Histeaching to both these categories of humankind - He formed the two into one new man, making peace andreconciling us through Himself to the Father and to one another (cf. Eph. 2:14-16): our will is no longer opposed tothe principle of nature, but we adhere to it without deviating in either will or nature.

The Logos purifies human nature from the law of sin by not permitting His incarnation for our sake to be precededby sensual pleasure. For His conception took place miraculously without seed, and His birth supranaturally withoutthe loss of His Mother's virginity. That is to say, when God was bom from His Mother, through His birth Hetightened the bonds of her virginity in a manner

surpassing nature; and in those that are willing He frees the whole of human nature from the oppressive rule of thelaw which dominates it, in so far as they imitate His self-chosen death by mortifying the earthly aspects ofthemselves (cf. Col. 3:5). For the mystery of salvation belongs to those who choose it, not to those who arecompelled by force.

The Logos destroys the tyranny of the evil one, who dominates us through deceit, by triumphantly using as aweapon against him the flesh defeated in Adam. In this way he shows that what was once captured and made subjectto death now captures the captor: by a natural death it destroys the captor's life and becomes a poison to him,making him vomit up all those he was able to swallow because he had the power of death. But to humankind itbecomes life, like leaven in the dough impelling the whole of nature to rise like dough in the resurrection of life (cf1 Cor. 5:6-7). It was to confer this life that the Logos who was God became man - a truly unheard of thing - andwillingly accepted the death of the flesh.

The Lord's Prayer, as I have said, contains a petition for each of these things. First, it speaks of the Father, Hisname, and His kingdom. Second, it shows us that the person who prays is by grace the son of this Father. It asks thatthose in heaven and those on earth may be united in one will. It tells us to ask for our

dally bread. It lays down thatmen should be reconciled with one another and unites our nature with itself when we forgive and are forgiven, forthen it is not split asunder by differences of will and purpose. It teaches us to pray against entering into temptation,since this is the law of sin. And it exhorts in to ask for deliverance from the evil one. For the author and giver ofdivine blessings could not but be our teacher as well, providing the words of this prayer as precepts of life for thosedisciples who believe in Him and follow the way He taught m the flesh. Through these words He has revealed the

hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge (of. Col. 2:3) that as pure form exist in Him; and in all who offer thisprayer He kindles the desire to enjoy such treasures.

It is for this reason, I think, that scripture calls this teaching 'prayer', since it contains petitions for the gifts that Godgives to men by grace. Our divinely inspired fathers have explained prayer in a similar way, saying that prayer ispetition for that which God naturally gives men to the manner appropriate to Him, while a vow.

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conversely, is a promise of what men who worship God sincerely resolve to offer Him. The fathers cite manyScriptural texts to illustrate this distinction such as, 'Make your vows to the Lord our God and perform them' (Ps.76:11. LXX), and 'I will give Thee, 0 Lord, what I have vowed' (Jonah 2:10. LXX), which refer to vows. On thesubject of prayer they quote such texts as 'Hannah prayed to the Lord, saying, O Lord of hosts, if Thou wilt indeedlisten to Thy handmaid and give me a child' (cf. ISam. 1:11), and 'Hezekiah the king of Judah and the prophetIsaiah the son of Amoz prayed to the Lord' (cf 2 Chr. 32:20), and 'Pray then like this: Our Father who art inheaven' (Matt. 6:9), as the Lord said to the disciples. Consequently, a vow is a decision to keep the commandments,confirmed by a promise on the part of the person making the vow; and a prayer is a petition by one who has kept thecommandments that he may be transformed by the commandments he has kept. Or, rather, a vow is a contest ofvirtue that God welcomes most readily whenever it is offered to Him;

and prayer is the prize of \'irtue that God givesjoyfully when the contest is won.

Since, then, prayer is petition for the blessings given by the incarnate Logos, let us make Him our teacher in prayer.And when we have contemplated the sense of each phrase as carefully as possible, let us confidently set it forth; forthe Logos Himself gives us, in the manner that is best for us, the capacity to understand what He says.

'Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come" (Matt. 6:9-10) It is appropriate that atthe outset the Lord should teach those who pray to start with theology, and should initiate them into the mode ofexistence of Him who is by essence the created Cause of all things. For these opening words of the prayer contain arevelation of the Father, of the name of the Father, and of the kingdom of the Father, so that from this beginning wemay be taught to revere, invoke and worship the Trinity in unity. For the name of God the Father exists insubstantial form as the only-begotten son. Again the kingdom of God the Father exists in substantial form as theHoly Spirit: what Matthew calls 'kingdom' in this context one of the other Evangelists has elsewhere called 'HolySpirit', saying, 'May Thy Holy Spirit come and purify

us. For the Father's name is sot something which He has acquired, nor is the kmgdom a dignity ascribed to Him: Hedoes not have a beginning, so that at a certain moment He begins to be Father or King, but He is eternal and so iseternally Father and King. In no sense at all, therefore, has He either begun to exist or begun to exist as Father orKing. And if He exists eternally, not only is He eternally Father and King but also the Son and Holy Spirit co-existwith Him eternally in substantial form, having their being from Him and by nature inhering in Him beyond anycause or principle: they are not sequent to Him, nor have they come into existence after Him in a contingent manner.The relationship of co-inherence between the Persons embraces all three of them simultaneously, not permitting anyof the three to be regarded as prior or sequent to the others.

At the outset of this prayer, then, we honor the coessential and supraessential Trinity as the creative cause of ourcoming into existence. Secondly, we are

taught to proclaim the grace of our adoption, since we have been foundworthy of addressing our Creator by nature as our Father by grace. Thus, venerating this title of our begetter bygrace, we strive to stamp our Creator's qualities on our lives, sanctifying His name on earth, taking after Him as ourFather, showing ourselves to be His children through our actions, and through all that we think or do glorifying theauthor of this adoption, who is by nature Son of the Father.

We hallow or sanctify the name of our heavenly Father by grace when we mortify our desire for material things andpurify ourselves of coiTupting passions. For sanctification is truly the complete mortification and cessation of desirein the senses. When we have achieved this we assuage the uncouth turbulence of our mcensive power, for the desirethat arouses it and persuades it to fight for its own pleasures has now been quelled by holiness. For anger, being bynature the protagonist of desire, stops of its own accord when once it sees the desire has been put to death.

It is thus fitting that, anger and desire repudiated, we should next

invoke the rule of the kingdom of God the Father with the words 'Thy kingdom come' (Matt. 6:10), that is, 'May theHoly Spirit come": for, having put away these things, we are now made into a temple for God through the HolySpirit by the teaching and practice of gentleness. "For on whom shall I rest,' says Scripture, 'but on him who isgentle and humble, and trembles at my words?' (cf. Isa, 66:2). It is dear from this that the kingdom of God theFather belongs to the humble and the gentle. For 'blessed are the gentle, for they will inherit the earth' (Matt. 5:5). Itis not this physical earth, which by nature occupies a middle place in the universe, that God promises as aninheritance for those who love Him - not, at least, if He is speaking truly when He says, 'In the resurrection theyneither marry nor are given in. marriage, but are as the angels in heaven' (Matt. 22:30), and 'Come, you whom myFather has blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world' (Matt. 25:34), andelsewhere again to someone else who has striven with goodwill, 'Enter into the joy of your Lord' (Matt. 25:21). Andafter the Lord St Paul also says, 'The trumpet will sound

and first the dead in Christ will rise up incorrupt; then wewho are alive and remain will be caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so we shall bewith the Lord for ever' (cf. 1 Thess. 4:16-17).

Since these things have been promised to those who love the Lord, what man prompted by intelligence and wishingto serve it would ever say, from a literal reading of Scripture alone, that heaven, and the kingdom prepared from thefoundation of the world, and the mystically hidden joy of the Lord, and the perpetual dwelling with the Lord enjoyedby the saints, are to be identified with the earth? In this text (Matt. 5:5) I drink that the word 'earth' signifies theresolution and strength of the inner stability, immovably rooted in goodness, that is possessed by gentle, people.This state of stability exists eternally with the Lord, contains unfailing joy, enables the gentle to attain the kingdomprepared from the beginning, and has its station and dignity in heaven. It also permits the gentle to inherit theprinciple of virtue, as if virtue were the earth that occupies a middle place in the universe. For the gentle personholds a middle position between honor and obloquy, and remains dispassionate, neither puffed up by the first norcast down by the second. For the intelligence is by nature superior to both praise and blame;

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and so, when it has put away the sensual desire, it is no longer troubled by either the one or the other, havinganchored the whole power of the soul in divine and unassailable liberty. The Lord, wanting to impart this liberty toHis disciples says, 'Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you willfind rest for your souls' (Matt. 11:29). He calls the rule of the divine kingdom "rest' because it confers on thoseworthy of it a lordship free from all servitude.

If the indestructible power of the pure kingdom is given to the humble and the gentle, what man will be so lacking in

love and so completely without appetite for divine blessings that he will not desire the greatest degree of humilityand gentleness in order to take on the stamp of the divine kingdom, so far as this is possible for men, and to bear inhimself by

grace an exact spiritual likeness of Christ, who is by nature the truly great king? In this likeness, says StPaul, 'there is neither male nor female' (Gal. 3:28), that is, there is neither anger nor desire. Of these, the firsttyrannically perverts judgment and makes the mind betray the law of nature, while the second scorns the onedispassionate cause and nature, that alone is traly desirable, in favor of what is inferior, giving preference to theflesh rather than to the spirit, and taking pleasure more in visible things than in the magnificence and glory ofintelligible realities. In this way with the lubricity of sensual pleasure it seduces the intellect from the divineperception of spiritual realities that is proper to it.

It is our aim to make the intelligence stand alone, stripped through the virtues of its affection for the body: for thisaffection, even when totally dispassionate, is still natural. The spirit, completely triumphing over nature, has topersuade the intellect to desist from moral philosophy m older to commune with the supra-essential Logos throughdirect and undivided contemplation, in spite of the fact that moral philosophy help the intellect to cut itself off from,and to go beyond, things pertaining to the flux of time. For when the intellect has become free from its attachment tosensible objects, it should not be burdened my longer with preoccupations about morality as with a shaggy cloak.

Elijah clearly reveals this mystery in a typological manner through his actions (cf. 2 Kgs. 2:11-14). For when he wasborne aloft he gave Elisha his cloak, that is, the mortification of the flesh which

constitutes the chief glory of moral conduct. He did this so that Elisha should have the support of the Spirit in hisbattle against hostile powers and should triumph over the flux and instability of nature, typified by the Jordan: sothat, in other words, he would not be immersed in the turbidity and slime of material attachment and thus preventedfrom Crossing over into the holy land. Meanwhile, Elijah himself advanced freely towards God, Unencumbered byattachment to any created thing. His desire being undivided and his will unmixed, he made his dwelling with Himwho is simple by nature, carried there by the interdependent cardinal virtues, harnessed spiritually to one anotherlike horses of fire.

Elijah knew that in the disciple of Christ there must be no imbalance of dispositions, for such diversity is proof of alack of inward unity. Thus the passion of desire produces a diffusion of blood around the heart, and the mcensivepower when roused causes the blood to boil. He who already lives and moves and has his being in Christ (cf. Acts

17:28) has annulled in himself the production of what is imbalanced and disunited: as 1 have said, he does not bearwithin him, like male and female, the opposing dispositions of such passions. In this way, the intelligence is notenslaved by the passions and made subject to their fickleness. Naturally endowed with the holiness of the divineimage, the intelligence urges the soul to conform itself by its own free choice to the divine likeness, in this way thesoul is able to participate in the great kingdom that exists in a substantive manner in God, the Father of all, and tobecome a translucent abode of the Holy Spirit, receiving - if it may be expressed in this way - the whole authority ofthe knowledge of the divine nature in so far as this is possible. Where this authority prevails, the production of whatis inferior automatically comes to an end and only what is superior is generated; for the soul that through the graceof its calling resembles God keeps inviolate withm itself the Substance of the blessings bestowed upon it. In soulssuch as this Christ always desires to be bom in a mystical way, becoming incarnate in those who attain salvation,and making the soul that gives birth to Him a Virgin Mother; for such a soul, to put it briefly, is not conditioned bycategories like those of male and female that typify a nature subject to generation and corruption.

Let no one be shocked to hear me speak of the corruption that is inherent in generation. For when one has justly anddispassionately

examined the nature of what comes into being and ceases to be, one will clearly see that generation begins withcorruption and ends in corruption. Christ, and the Christ-like way of life and understanding, as 1 have said, are freeof the passions characteristic of such generation. At least, this is the case if St Paul was speaking the truth when hesaid that in Christ Jesus "there is neither male nor female" (Gal.

3:28), meaning by these terms the characteristicsand passions of a nature subject to generation and corruption. For in Christ and the Christ-like way of life there isonly a deifonn understanding imbued with divine knowledge, and a single disposition of will and purpose thatchooses only virtue.

Moreover, in Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew (cf. Gal. 3:28). By this is meant differing or, rather, contraryviews about God. The Greek affirms a host of ruling principles and divides the one fundamental principle intoopposing operations and powers, devising a polytheistic worship full of contradictions because of the multitude ofobjects to be venerated, and ridiculous because of its many modes of veneration. The Jew affirms a fundamentalprinciple which, although one, is narrow, imperfect and almost non-existent, since it is devoid of immanentconsciousness and life; and so he falls into an evil which is just as bad as that into which the Greek falls for theopposite reason, namely disbelief in the true God. For he limits the fundamental principle to a single Person, onethat exists without Logos and Spirit, or that merely possesses Logos and Spirit as qualities; for he fails to realize

what kind of God this would be if deprived of these two other Persons, or how He could be God if assigned them asaccidents by participation, as is the case with created intelligent beings. Neither Greek nor Jew, then, has any placeat all in Christ. In Him there is only the principle of true religion and the steadfast law of mystical theology, thatrejects both the dilatation of the Divinity, as in Greek polytheism, and the contraction of the Divinity, as in Jewishmonotheism. In this way the Divine is not full of internal contradictions, as it is with the Greeks, because of anatural plurality, nor is it regarded as passible, as it is by the Jews, because of being a single Person, deprived ofLogos and Spirit, or only possessing Logos and Spirit as qualities, without itself being Intellect and Logos andSpirit.

Mystical theology teaches us, who through faith have been adopted by grace and brought to the knowledge of truth,to recognize

one nature and power of the Divinity, that is to say, one God contemplated in

Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It teachesus to know God as a single unoriginate Intellect, self-existent, the begetter of a single, self-existent, unoriginateLogos, and the source of a single everlasting life, self-existent as the Holy Spirit: a Trinity in Unity and a Unity inTrinity. The Divinity is not one thing in another thing: the Trinity is not in the Unity like an accident in a substanceor vice versa, for God is without qualities. The Divinity is not one thing and another thing: the Unity does not differfrom the Trinity by distinction of nature; the nature is simple and single in both. Nor in the Divinity is one thingdependent on or prior to another: the Trinity is not distinguished from the Unity, or the Unity from the Trinity, byinferiority of power; nor is the Unity distinguished from the Trinity as something common and general abstracted ina purely conceptual manner from the particulars in which it occurs: it is a substantively self-subsistent essence and atruly self-consolidating power. Nor in the Divinity has one thing come into being through another: there is withm itno such mediating relationship as that of cause and effect, since it is altogether identical with itself and free fromrelationships. Nor in the Divinity is one thing derived from another: the Trinity does not derive from the Unity, sinceit is ungenerated and self-manifested. On the contrary, the Unity and the Trinity are both affirmed and conceived astruly one and the same, the first denoting the principle of essence, the second the mode of existence. The whole isthe single Unity, not divided by the Persons; and the whole is also the single Trinity, the Persons of which are notconfused by the Unity. Thus polytheism is not introduced by division of the Unity or disbelief in the true God byconfusion of the Persons.

When Christian doctrine avoids these errors it achieves a genuine splendor. By Christian doctrine I mean theteaching of Christ, the new proclamation of trath in which there is neither male nor female, that is, the signs and

passions of human nature when subject to birth and decay; neither Greek nor Jew, that is, contrary views of theDivinity; neither uncircumcision nor circumcision (cf. Col. 3:11), that is, the different kinds of worship appropriateto these views, the first divinizing nature because of the passions and setting the creature against the Creator, and thesecond because of its misuse of symbols of the Law vilifying visible creation and

slandering the Creator as the source of evil. Both constitute equally an insult to the Divine and lead equally to evil.Neither in Christian doctrine is there barbarian or Scythian, that is, the deliberate fragmentation of the single natureof human beings which has made them subject to the unnatural law of mutual slaughter; neither is there bond or free,that IS, the fortuitous division of this same nature which leads to one person despising another although both are bynature of an equal dignity, and which encourages men to dominate others tyrannically, thus violating the divineimage in man. 'But Christ is all and in all' (Col. 3:11), in spirit fashioning the unongmate kingdom by means of thatwhich lies beyond nature and law.

This kingdom is characterized, as we have shown, by humility and gentleness of heart. It is the combination of thesetwo qualities that constitutes the perfection of the person-created according to Christ. For every humbler person isinvariably gentle and every gentle person is invariably humble. A person is humble when he knows that his verybeing is on loan to him. He is gentle when he realizes how to use the powers given to him in a manner that accordswith nature and, withdrawing their activity completely from the senses, places them at the service of the intelligencein order to produce the virtues. In this way his intellect moves incessantly towards God, while where his senses areconcerned he is not in the least perturbed by any of the things that afflict the body, nor does he stamp his soul withany trace of distress, thereby disrupting his joy-creative state. For he does not regard what is painful in the senses asa privation of pleasure: He knows only one pleasure, the marriage of the soul with the Logos. To be deprived of thismarriage is endless torment, extending by nature through all the ages. Thus when he has left the body and all thatpertains to it, he is impelled towards union with the divine; for even if he were to be master of the whole world, hewould still recognize only one real disaster: failure to attain by grace the deification for which he is hoping.

Let us, then, 'cleanse ourselves from all pollution of the flesh and spirit' (2 Cor. 7:1), so that when we haveextinguished our sensual desire, which indecently wantons with the passions, we may hallow the divine name. Andwith our intelligence let us bind fast our anger, deranged and frenzied by sensual pleasure, so that we may

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receive the kingdom of God the Father, that comes to us through gentleness.

Having done all this, we may go on to the next phrase of the prayer, saying, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is inheaven' (Matt. 6:10). He who worships God mystically with the faculty of the intelligence alone, keeping it freefrom sensual desire and anger, fulfils the divine will on earth just as the orders of angels fulfill it in heaven. He hasbecome in all things a co-worshipper and fellow-citizen with the angels, conforming to St Paul's statement, 'Ourcitizenship is in heaven' (Phil. 3:20). Among the angels desire does not sap the intellect's intensity through sensualpleasure, nor does anger make them rave and storm indecently at their fellow creatures: there is only the intelligencenaturally leading intelligent beings towards the source of intelligence, the Logos Himself. God rejoices inintelligence alone and this is what He demands from us His servants. He reveals this when He says to David, 'Whathave I in heaven, and besides yourself what have I desired on earth?' (Ps. 73:25. LXX). Nothing is offered to God inheaven by the holy angels except intelligent worship; and it is this that God also demands from us when He teachesus to say in our prayers, 'Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven' (Matt. 6:10).

Let our intelligence, then, be moved to seek God, let our desire be roused in longing for Him, and let our incensivepower struggle to keep guard over our attachment to Him. Or, more precisely, let our whole intellect be directedtowards God, tensed by our incensive power as if by some nerve, and fired with longing by our desire at its mostardent. For if we imitate the heavenly angels in this way, we will find ourselves always worshipping God, behavingon earth as the angels do in heaven. For, like that of the angels, our intellect will not be attracted in the least byanything less than God.

If we live in the way we have promised, we will receive, as daily and life-giving bread for the nourishment of oursouls and the maintenance of the good state with which we have been blessed, the Logos Himself; for if was Hewho said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven and gives life to the world', (cf. John 6:33-35). In proportionto our capacity the Logos will become everything for us who are nourished through virtue and wisdom; and inaccordance with His own judgment He will be embodied differently in each recipient of salvation while

we are stillliving in this age. This

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is indicated in the phrase of the prayer which says, 'Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11).

I believe that the expression "this day" refers to the present age. It is as if one should say, after a clearerunderstanding of the context of the prayer, "Since we are in this present mortal life, give us this day our daily breadwhich Thou hast originally prepared for human nature so that it might become immortal (cf Gen. 1:9); for in thisway the food of the bread of life and knowledge will triumph over the death that comes through sin." Thetransgression of the divine commandment prevented the first man from partaking of this bread (cf. Gen. 3:19).Indeed, had he taken his fill of this divine food, he would not have been made subject to death through sin.

He who prays to receive this daily bread, however, does not automatically receive it all as it is in itself: he receives itin accordance with his receptive capacity. For the Bread of Life in His love gives Himself to all who ask, but Hedoes not give to all in the same way. He gives liberally to those who have done great things, and more sparingly tothose who have achieved less. Thus He gives to each person in accordance with the receptive capacity of his or herintellect.

The Savior Himself has led me to this interpretation of the phrase we are considering, because He commands Hisdisciples explicitly not to take any thought at all for sensible food saying, "Do not worry about your life, what youwill eat, or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will put on. For the heathen seek all these things. Butseek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things as well will be given to you' (Matt. 6:25,32, 33). How then can it be that He teaches us to pray for what He commands us not to seek? Obviously He does notorder us to do anything of the kind: we should ask in prayer only for things that we are commanded to seek. If theSavior commanded us to seek only the kingdom of God and righteousness, then surely He intended those who desiredivine gifts to ask for this kingdom in their prayers,

in this way, by showing what petitions are blessed by His grace.He conjoins the intention of those who ask with the will of Him who bestows the grace.

If, however, we also take this clause to mean we should pray for the daily bread that sustains our present life, let usbe careful not to overstep the bounds of the prayer, presumptuously assuming that

we will live for many cycles of years and forgetting that we are mortal and that our life passes by like a shadow; butfree from anxiety let us pray for bread sufficient for one day at a time, thus showing that as Christian philosopherswe make life a rehearsal for death, in our purpose anticipating nature and, even before death comes, cutting off thesoul's anxiety about bodily things. In this way the soul will not transfer its natural appetite to material things,attaching itself to what is corruptible, and will not learn the greed that deprives it of a rich possession of divineblessings.

Let us therefore shun the love of matter and our attachment to matter with all the strength we have, as if washingdust from our spiritual eyes; and let us be satisfied simply with what sustains our present life, not with what pampersit. Let us pray to God for (his, as we have been taught, so that we may keep our souls unenslaved and absolutely freefrom domination by any of the visible things loved for the sake of the body. Let us show that we eat for the sake ofliving, and not be guilty of living for the sake of eating. The first is a sign of intelligence, the second proof of itsabsence. And let us be exact in the way we observe this prayer, thereby showing through our actions that we cleavefast to the one life lived in the spirit alone, and that we use our present life to acquire this spiritual life. We use it,that is to say, only in so far as we do not refuse to sustain our body with bread and to keep it as far as possible in itsnatural state of good health, our aim being not just to live but to live for God. For we make the body, renderedintelligent by the virtues, a messenger of the soul, and the soul, once it is firmly established in the good, a herald ofGod; and on the natural plane we restrict our prayer for this bread to one day only, not daring to extend our petitionfor it to a second day because of Him who gave us the prayer. When we

have thus conformed ourselves to the senseof the prayer, we can proceed, in purity to the next petition, saying, 'And forgive us our debts as we forgive ourdebtors' (Matt. 6:12).

According to the first interpretation proposed for the preceding section of the prayer, the words 'this day" symbolizethe present age; and the person who prays in this age for the incorruptible bread of wisdom, from which we werecutoff by the original transgression, delights in one thing only: the attaimnent of divme blessings. It is God

who by nature bestows these blessings, but it is the recipient's free will that safeguards them. Similarly, such aperson knows only

one pain: the failure to attain these blessings. It is the devil who prompts this failure, but it is the person himself whomakes it an actuality, because of his weakness of will with regard to the divine, and because he does not hold fast to

the precious gift for which he has prayed. But if someone is not in the least concerned with anything in the visibleworld, and consequently is not overcome by any bodily affliction, then such a person truly and dispassionately for-gives those who sin against him: for no one can rob him of the good to which he aspires and which by nature isunassailable.

A person of this land makes himself a pattern of virtue for God, if it may be put in this way: for by saying 'Forgiveus our debts as we forgive our debtors', he exhorts God, who is beyond imitation, to come and imitate him: and hebegs God to treat him as he himself has treated his neighbors. For he wishes to be forgiven by God as he himself hasforgiven the debts of those who have sinned against him: hence, just as God dispassionately forgives His creatures,so such a person must himself remain dispassionate in the face of what happens to him and forgive those who offendhim. He must not allow the memory of things that afflict him to be stamped on his intellect lest he inwardly sundershuman nature by separating himself from some other man, although he is a man himself. When a man's will is inunion with: the principle of nature in this way, God and nature

are naturally reconciled: but, failing such a union, ournature remains self-divided in its will and cannot receive God's gift of Himself.

This surely is why God wishes us first to be reconciled with one another. He Himself has no need to learn from ushow to be reconciled with sinners and to waive the penalty for a multitude of atrocious crimes: but He wishes topurify us of our passions and show us that the measure of grace conferred on those who are forgiven corresponds totheir inward state. It is evident that when man's will is m union with the principle of nature, he is not m a state ofrebellion against God. Since the principle of nature is a law both natural and divine, and there is nothing in itcontrary to the Logos, when a man's will functions in accordance with this principle it accords with God in allthings. Such a condition of the will is an inner state actively characterized by the grace of what is good by nature andhence productive of virtue.

This, then, is the inner state of the man who prays for Gnostic

bread. After him comes the man who, constrained by nature, seeks ordinary bread, but sufficient for one day only.He will attain the same inner state as the first when he has forgiven his debtors their debts, as he knows that he is bynature mortal. Moreover, by accepting the uncertainty of the future and waiting each day for what is provided bynature, he anticipates nature, choosing to become dead to the world and to comply with the text, 'For Thy sake weare put to death all the day long: we are regarded as sheep for slaughtering' (Ps. 44:22: Rom. 8:36). He makes his

peace with all in order to be free from all the depravities of this present age when he departs to eternal life, and toreceive from the Judge and Savior of the universe a just recompense for what he has done in this life. Both thesekinds of men, therefore, need to exhibit a pure disposition towards those who have offended them. This is true ingeneral: but it has particular reference to the concluding words of the prayer: 'And lead us not into temptation, butdeliver us from what is evil' (Matt. 6:13).

Scripture reveals in these words that he who has not completely forgiven those who stumble, and has not brought hisheart to God free from grievance and illuminated with the light of reconciliation with his neighbor, will fail to attainthe grace of the blessings he has prayed for. Indeed, he will justly be handed over to temptation and to evil, so that,having retracted his judgments of other people, he may learn to purify himself of his own sins. Scripture here meansby temptation the law of sin, of which the first man was free when he was created. And by 'what is evil' it means thedevil, who has mixed this law of sin with human nature, deceitfully persuading man to transfer his soul's desire fromwhat is permitted to what is forbidden, and to turn aside to the transgression of the divine commandment. The resultof this is the loss of the incorruptibility which had been given by grace.

Alternatively, by temptation Scripture means the soul's predilection for the passions of the flesh: and by 'what isevil' the actual way in which this impassioned proclivity is satisfied. The just Judge does not liberate a man fromeither of these if he has not forgiven his debtors their debts. So long as he prays merely in words for liberation, God.allows him to be defiled by the law of sin: and so long as his will is stubborn and raw. He abandons him to thedomination of evil: for he has chosen the shameful passions (cf Rom. 1:26),

of which the devil is the sower, in preference to nature, of which God is the creator. God leaves him free to incline,if he so wishes, towards the passions of the-flesh, and actually to satisfy that inclination. Valuing the insubstantialpassions more highly than nature, in his concern for these passions he has become ignorant of the principle ofnature. Had he followed that principle, he would have known what constitutes the law of nature and what thetyranny of the passions - a tyranny brought about, not by nature, but by deliberate choice. He would then haveaccepted the law of nature that is maintained through activities which are natural: and he would have expelled thetyranny of the passions completely from his will. He would have obeyed nature with his intelligence, for nature initself is pure and undefiled, faultless, free from hatred and alienation, and he would have made his will once more acompanion to

nature, totally stripped of everything not bestowed by the principle of nature. In this way he wouldhave eradicated all hatred for and all alienation from what is by nature akm to him, so that when saying this prayerhe would be heard and would receive from God a double rather than a single grace: forgiveness for offences already

committed, and protection and deliverance from those which lie in the future. For he would not be allowed to enterinto temptation and to fall into the power of evil for one simple reason: his readiness to forgive his neighbors theirdebts.

Thus - to go back a little and comment briefly on what has been said - if we really wish to be delivered from evil andnot to enter into temptation, we should trust in God and forgive our debtors their debts. "For if you do not forgivepeople their sins', says Scripture, 'your heavenly Father will not forgive you yours' (Matt. 6:15). We should do thisnot only to receive forgiveness for the offences we have committed, but also to defeat the law of sin -because thenwe would not be allowed to undergo the experience of bemg tempted by it - and to trample on the originator of thislaw, the evil serpent from whom we entreat God to deliver us. For Christ, who has overcome the world (cf. John16:33), is our leader. He arms us with the laws of the commandments, and by enabling us to reject the passions Heunites us m pure love with nature itself. Being the bread of life, of wisdom, spiritual knowledge and righteousness.He arouses in us an insatiable desire for Himself If we fulfill His Father's will He makes us co-worshippers with the

angels, when in our conduct we imitate them as we should and so conform to the heavenly state. Then He leads usup still further on the supreme ascent of divine truth to the Father of lights, and makes us share in the divine nature(cf. 2 Pet. 1:4) through participation by grace in the Holy Spirit. By virtue of this participation we are called childrenof God and, cleansed from all stain, in a manner beyond circumscription, we all encircle Him who is the author ofthis grace and by nature the Son of the Father. From Him, through Him and in Him we have and always will haveour being, our movement and our life (cf. Acts

17:28).

When we pray, let our aim be this mystery of deification, which shows us what we were once like and what the self-emptying of the only-begotten Son through the flesh has now made us; which shows us, that is, the depths to whichwe were dragged down by the weight of sin, and the heights to which we have been raised by His compassionatehand. In this way we shall come to have greater love for Him who has prepared this salvation for us with suchwisdom. Bringing the prayer to fulfillment through our actions, we shall manifestly proclaim God as our true Father,by grace. We shall show that the evil one, who is always tyrannically attempting to gain control of our naturethrough the shameful passions, is not the father of our life, and that we are not unwittingly exchanging life for death.For both God and the devil naturally impart their qualities to those who approach either of them: God bestowseternal life on those who love Him, while the devil, operating through temptations that we subject to our volition,causes the death of his followers.

For according to Scripture there are two kinds of temptation, one pleasurable, the other painful. One is the result ofdeliberate choice: the other is unsought. The first kind generates sin. We have been commanded by the Lord'steaching to pray not to fall into this, for He says, "Lead us not into temptation" (Matt. 6:13), and 'Watch and pray sothat you do not enter into temptation' (Matt. 26:41). The other kind of temptation punishes sin, chastising a sin-loving disposition with sufferings that are unsought. To the person who endures this kind of temptation - whichcomes in the form of a trial - and who in particular is not riveted to evil, the words of the apostle James may beapplied: 'My brethren, regard it as a great joy whenever you find yourselves beset by many trials; because thetesting of your faith produces patient endurance; this endurance

shapes the character; and the character thus shaped should be brought to fruition' (cf. Jas. 1:2-4: Rom. 5:4). The evilone works his malice both through the temptation that is subject to our volition and through the trial that comesunsought. Where the first is concerned, by sowing the soul with bodily

pleasures and by exciting it in this manner,he contrives to divert its desire away from divine love. Where the trial is concerned, in his wish to destroy naturethrough pain, he cunningly tries to force the soul, enervated by its sufferings, to calumniate and abuse the Creator.

But, knowing the wiles of the evil one, let us pray for deliverance from the temptations subject to our volition, sothat we do not defied our desire from divine love; and let us bravely endure the trials that come unsought, since theyvisit us with God's consent and by enduring them we show that we have not put nature before the Creator of nature.May all of us who call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ be delivered from the present delights and the futureafflictions of the evil one by participating in the reality of the blessings held in store and already revealed to us inChrist our Lord Himself, who alone with the Father and the Holy Spirit is praised by all creation. Amen.

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St Thalassios the Libyan

(7* Century)

(Volume 2, pp. 306-332)

Inroductory Note

St Thalassios, priest and abbot at a monastery in Libya, was a personal friend of St Maximos the Confessor, whose

largest work. To Thalassios: On J'arious Questions relating to Holy Scripture, consists of answers to difficultiesraised by St Thalassios. The Two Hundred Texts on Theology by St Maximos are also dedicated to St Thalassios,and in addition five of St Maximos' letters are addressed to him.^ Twice St Maximos describes himself as a discipleof St Thalassios." Perhaps this is no more than an expression of courtesy towards someone older than himself, andit may have been St Thalassios who was in reality the disciples but it is not impossible that St Maximos wasindeed decisively influenced by him."*

The four centuries here translated are the only known work of the Libyan abbot. They display at many points theinfluence of Evagrios, but lay greater emphasis upon the integral unity of body and soul. St Thalassios, like StMaximos, sees

self-love as the source of all the vices, and the two agree in emphasizing the supreme importance oflove.

In the church calendar St Thalassios is commemorated on 20 May. For the present translation the Greek text inthe Philokalia has been compared with that in Migne, P.G. xci, 1427-70, which is often more reliable.

' Letters 9, 26, 40-42.

^Letter 9(V.G. xci, 449A); Opuscula (P.G. xci, 29D).' This is the view of M. Viller, 'Aux sources de la spirituahte de S. Maxime',Revue d'ascitique et de mystique xi (1930), pp. 262-3.

" See M.-Th. Disdier, 'Le temoignage spirituel de Thalassius le Lybien', Etudes byzantines ii (i 944), pp. 79-118.

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St Thalassios the Libyan

On Love, Self-control and Lifein Accordance with the Intellect

First Century

1. An all-embracing and intense longing for God binds those who experience it both to God and to one another.

2. An intellect that has acquired spiritual love does not have thoughts unworthy

of this love about anyone.

3. He who conceals his hypocrisy beneath feigned love blesses with his mouth but curses inwardly.

4. He who has acquired love endures calmly and patiently the injuries and sufferings that his enemies inflict onhim.

5. Love alone harmoniously joins all created things with God and with each other.

6. A person who does not tolerate suspicion or disparagement of others possesses true love.

7. He who does nothing to dispel love is precious in the sight of God and among men.

8. True words from a pure conscience betoken unfeigned love.

9. If you tell your brother how someone else denigrates him you conceal your own envy in the guise of goodwill.

10. Worldly virtues promote human glory, spiritual virtues the glory of God.

11. Love and self-control purify the soul, while pure prayer illumines the intellect.

12. A strong man is one who repels evil through the practice of the virtues and with spiritual knowledge.

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St Thalassios the Libyan

On Love, Self-control and Lifein Accordance with the Intellect

First Century

13. He who has acquired dispassion and spiritual knowledge has been granted God's grace.

14. If you wish to overcome impassioned thoughts, acquire self-control and love for your neighbor.

15. Guard yourself from hatred and dissipation, and you will not be impeded at the time of prayer.

16. Perfume is not to be found in mud, nor the fragrance of love in the soul of a rancorous man.

17. Firmly control anger and desire, and you will speedily rid yourself of evil thoughts.

18. Inner work destroys self-esteem, and if you despise no one you will repel pride.

19. The signs of self-esteem are hypocrisy and falsehood; those of pride are presumption and jealousy.

20. The true ruler is he who rales over himself and has subjected soul and body to the intelligence.

21. The genuineness of a friend is shown at a time of trial, if he shares the distress you suffer.

22. Seal your senses with stillness and sit in judgment upon the thoughts that attack your heart.

23. Respond without rancor to thoughts of dejection, but oppose thoughts of self-indulgence with enmity.

24. Stillness, prayer, love and self-control are a four-horsed chariot bearing the intellect to heaven.

25. Waste your body with fasting and vigils, and you will repulse the lethal thoughts of pleasure.

26. As wax melts before fire, so does an impure thought before the fear of God.

27. The intelligent soul is greatly harmed when it dallies with an ignoble passion.

28. Patiently endure the distressing and painful things that befall you, for through them God in His providence ispurifying you.

29. Now that you have renounced toe world and material things, renounce evil thoughts as well.

30. The proper activity of the intellect is to be attentive at every moment to the words of God.

31. It is God's task to administer the world and the soul's task to guide the body.

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On Love, Self-control and Lifein Accordance with the Intellect

First Century

32. With what hope will we meet Christ if we are still enslaved to the pleasures of the flesh?

33. Hardship and distress, whether of our own choosing or providential, destroy sensual pleasure.

34. The amassing of money fuels the passions, for it leads to increasing indulgence in all kinds of sensual pleasure.

35. The failure to secure sensual pleasure breeds dejection, while sensual pleasure itself is linked with all thepassions.

36. How God treats you depends upon how you treat your body.

37. God's justice is a fair requital for what we have done through our bodies.

38. Virtue and spiritual knowledge lead to immortality, their absence is the mother of death.

39. Distress that accords with God's will puts an end to sensual pleasure, and the destruction of such pleasure is thesoul's resurrection.

40. Dispassion is a state in which the soul does not yield to any evil impulse, and it can be realized only throughChrist's mercy.

41. Christ is the savior of both soul and body, and the person who follows in His footsteps is freed from evil.

42. If you wish to attain salvation, renounce sensual pleasure and learn self-control, love and how to pray withconcentration.

43. The mark of dispassion is true discrimination: for one who has attained the state of dispassion does all thingswith discrimination and according to measure and rule.

44. Our Lord and God is Jesus Christ, and the intellect that follows Him will not remain in darkness (cf John12;46).

45. Concentrate your intellect, keep watch over your thoughts, and fight with any of them that are impassioned.

46. There are three ways through which thoughts arise in you: through the senses, through the memory, and throughthe body's temperament. Of these the most irksome are those that come through the memory.

47. The man to whom wisdom has been given knows the inward essences of immaterial things and what is theorigin and consummation of the world.

48. Do not neglect the practice of the virtues and your intellect will be illumined; for it is written, 'I will open foryou invisible secret treasures' (Isa. 45:3. LXX).

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First Century

49. The man freed from his passions has been granted God's grace, and if: he has been found worthy of spiritualknowledge he has received great mercy.

50. The intellect freed from the passions becomes like light, unceasingly illumined by the contemplation of createdbeings.

51. Holy knowledge is the light of the soul; bereft of it, 'the fool walks in darkness' (Eccles. 2:14).

52. The man who lives in darkness is a fool, and the murk of ignorance awaits him.

53. The lover of Jesus will be freed from evil; the disciples of Jesus will behold true knowledge.

54. The intellect freed from the passions forms conceptual images that are also passion-free, whether the body isasleep or awake.

55. The completely purified intellect is cramped by created beings and longs to go beyond them.

56. Blessed is he who has attained boundless infinity, transcending all that is transitory.

57. He who stands in awe of God searches for the divine principles that God has implanted in creation: the lover oftruth finds them.

58 Rightly motivated, the intellect will find the truth; but motivated by passion it will miss the mark.

59. As God is unknowable in His essence, so is He infinite in His majesty.

60. God, whose essence is without origin or consummation, is also impenetrable in His wisdom.

61. The sublime providence of the Creator preserves everything that is.

62. In his mercy the Lord supports all who fall, and raises up all who are bowed down' (Ps. 145:14).

63. Christ in His justice rewards the living, the dead, and every single action.

64. If you wish to be in control of your soul and body, forestall the passions by

rooting out their causes.

65. Yoke the powers of the soul to the virtues and they will be freed from the tyranny of the passions.

66. Curb the impulses of desire by means of self-control and those of anger with spiritual love.[V2] 311

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First Century

67. Stillness and prayer are the greatest weapons of virtue, for they purify the intellect and confer on it spiritualinsight.

68. Only spiritual .conversation is beneficial; it is better to preserve stillness than to indulge in any other kind.

69. Of the five kinds of conversation choose the first three, be sparing of the fourth, and avoid the fifth.

70. The person who is unaffected by the things of this world loves stillness; and he who loves no human thing lovesall men.

71. The conscience is a true teacher, and whoever listens to it will not stumble.

72. Only those who have reached the extremes of virtue or of evil are not judged by their consciences.

73. Total dispassion renders our conceptual images passion-free: perfect spiritual knowledge brings us into thepresence of Him who is utterly beyond knowledge.

74. Failure to obtain pleasure induces a culpable kind of distress he who scorns pleasure is free from distress.

75. In general, distress arises from the privation of pleasure, whether it be of a worldly kind or relate to God.

76. Kingship, goodness and wisdom belong to God; he who attains them dwells

in heaven.

77. The person who in his actions shows that he prefers his body to his soul, and the world to God, is a patheticcreature.

78. He who does not envy the spiritually mature and is merciful to the wicked has attained an equal love for all.

79. The person who applies the laws of virtue to soul and body is truly fit to rule.

80. Spiritual commerce consists in being detached equally from the pleasures and the pains of this life for the sakeof the blessings held in store.

8L Love and self-control strengthen the soul: pure prayer and contemplation, the intellect.

82. When you hear something to your benefit, do not condemn the speaker; for if you do you will nullify his helpfuladmonition.

83. A depraved mind thmks evil thoughts and regards as defects the achievements of a neighbor.

84. Do not trust a thought that would judge your neighbor: for it is the man who is a storehouse of evil that thinksevil thoughts (cf Matt. 12:35).

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First Century

85. A good heart produces good thoughts: its thoughts correspond to what it stores up in itself.

86. Keep watch over your thoughts and shun evil. Then your intellect will not be darkened but, on the contrary, willsee.

87. Bear in mind the Jews and watch yourself carefully; for the Jews were blinded with jealousy and tookBeelzebub for their Lord and God (cf Matt.

12:24).

88. An evil suspicion darkens the mind (cf. Ecclus. 3:24) and diverts attention from the path to what lies beside it.

89. To each virtue there is an opposing vice; hence the wicked take vices for virtues.

90. If the mtellect dallies with pleasure or dejection, it rapidly succumbs to the passion of listlessness.

91. A pure conscience rouses the soul, but an impure thought debases it.

92. When the passions are active they cast out self-esteem; when they are expelled, they remtroduce it.

93. If you want to be free of all the passions, practice self-control, love and prayer.

94. An intellect that gives itself over to God in prayer frees the soul's passible aspect from the passions.

95. God, who gave being to all that is, at the same time united all things together in His providence.

96. Being Master, He became a servant, and so revealed to the world the depths of His providence.

97. God the Logos, in becoming incarnate while remaining unchanged, was united through His flesh with the wholeof creation.

98. There is a new wonder in heaven and on earth: God is on earth and man is in heaven.

99. He united men and angels so as to bestow deification on all creation.

100. The knowledge of the holy and coessential Trinity is the sanctification and deification of men and angels.

101. Forgiveness of sms is betokened by freedom from the passions; he who has

not yet been granted freedom fromthe passions has not yet received forgiveness.

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Second Century

1. If you want to be freed from all the vices simultaneously, renounce self-love, the mother of evils.

2. The soul's health consists in dispassion and spiritual knowledge: no slave to sensual pleasure can attain it.

3. Patient self-control and long-suffering love dry up the pleasures of soul and body.

4. Self-love - that is, friendship for the body - is the source of evil in the soul.

5. The intelligence by nature submits to the Logos and disciplines and subjugates the body.

6. It is an insult to the intelligence to be subject to what lacks intelligence and to concern itself with shamefuldesires.

7. For the deiform soul to abandon the Creator and worship the body is an act of depravity.

8. You were commanded to keep the body as a servant, not to be unnaturally enslaved to its pleasures.

9. Break the bonds of your friendship for the body and give it only what is absolutely necessary.

10. Enclose your senses in the citadel of stillness so that they do not involve the intellect in then' desires.

11. The greatest weapons of someone striving to lead a life of inward stillness are self-control, love, prayer andspiritual reading.

12. The intellect will go on looking for sensual pleasure until you subjugate the flesh and devote yourself tocontemplation.

13. Let us strive to fulfill the commandments so that we may be freed from the passions; and let us struggle to graspdivme doctrine so that we may be found worthy of spiritual knowledge.

14. The soul's immortality resides in dispassion and spiritual knowledge; no slave to sensual pleasure can attain it.[V2] 314

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Second Century

15. Subjugate your body, strip it of sensual pleasures, and free it from base servitude.

16. Created free and called to freedom (cf Gal. 5:13), do not be enslaved by impure passions.

17. The demons bind the intellect to sensible things by means of desire and fear, distress and sensual pleasure.

18. Fear of the Lord conquers desire, and distress that accords with God's will repulses sensual pleasure.

19. Desire for wisdom scorns fear, and the delight of spiritual knowledge expels distress.

20. The Scriptures contain four things: commandments, doctrines, threats and promises.

21. Self-control and strenuous effort curb desire; stillness and intense longing for God wither it.

22. Do not goad your brother with obscure words; you would not put up with similar treatment at his hands.

23. Long-suffering and readiness to forgive curb anger; love and compassion wither it.

24. If you have been given spiritual knowledge, you have been given noetic light; should you dishonor that light,you will see darkness.

25. The keeping of God's commandments generates dispassion; the soul's dispassion preserves spiritualknowledge.

26. Contemplate sensible objects noetically and you will raise your sense-perception above the realm of suchobjects.

27. Woman symbolizes the soul engaged in ascetic practice; through union with it the Intellect begets the virtues.

28. The study of divine principles teaches knowledge of God to the person who lives in truth, longing andreverence.

29. What light is to those who see and to what is seen, God is to intellective beings and to what is intelligible.

30. The sensible firmament symbolizes the firmament of faith in which all the saints shine like stars.

31. Jerusalem is the celestial knowledge of immaterial beings; within it the vision of peace can be contemplated.

32. Do not neglect the practice of the virtues; if you do, your spiritual knowledge will decrease, and when famineoccurs you will go down into Egypt (cf Gen. 41:57; 46:6).

33. Spiritual freedom is release from the passions; without Christ's mercy you cannot attain it.

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Second Century

34. The promised land is the kingdom of heaven whose ambassadors are dispassion and spiritual knowledge.

35. The Egypt of the spirit is the darkness of the passions; no one goes down to Egypt unless he is overtaken byfamine.

36. If you make a habit of listening to spiritual teaching, your intellect will escape from impure thoughts.

37. God alone is good and wise by nature; but if you exert yourself your intellect also becomes good and wisethrough participation.

38. Control your stomach, sleep, anger and tongue, and you will not "dash your foot against .a stoneXPs. 91: 12).

39. Strive to love every man equally, and you will simultaneously expel all the passions.

40. The contemplation of sensible thmgs is shared by the intellect and the senses; but the knowledge of intelligiblerealities pertains to the intellect alone.

41. The intellect cannot devote itself to intelligible realities unless you sunder its attachment to the senses and tosensible things.

42. The senses have a natural attachment to sensible things, and when distracted by them distract the intellect.

43. Devote your senses to the service of the intellect and give them no time to be diverted from it.

44. When the intellect gives its attention to sensible objects, withdraw your senses from them, bringing the objectsinto direct contact with the intellect.

45. A sign that the intellect is devoted to the contemplation of intelligible realities is its disdain for all that agitatesthe senses.

46. When the intellect is engaged in the contemplation of intelligible realities, its delight in them is such that it canhardly be dragged away.

47. When the intellect is rich in the knowledge of the One, the senses will be completely under control.

48. Prevent your intellect from pursuing sensible things, so that it does not reap the fruits of pleasure and painwhich they produce.

49. When the intellect devotes itself continually to divine realities, the soul's passible aspect becomes a godlikeweapon.

50. The intellect cannot be transformed by spiritual knowledge unless it first detaches itself from the soul's passibleaspect by means of its own virtues.

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Second Century

51. The intellect becomes a stranger to the things of this world when its attachment to the senses has beencompletely sundered.

52. The proper function of the soul's intelligent aspect is devotion to the knowledge of God, while that of itspassible aspect is the pursuit of self-control and love.

53. The intellect cannot dally with any sensible object unless it entertains at least some kind of passionate feelingfor it.

54. The intellect is perfect when transformed by spiritual knowledge; the soul is perfect when permeated by thevirtues.

55. The intellect's attachment to the senses enslaves it to bodily pleasure.

56. The intellect falls from the realm of spiritual knowledge when the soul's passible aspect abandons its ownvirtues.

57. Although we have received the power to become the children of God (cf John 1:12), we do not actually attainthis sonship unless we strip ourselves of the

passions.

58. Let no one think that he has actually become a child of God if he has not yet acquired divine qualities.

59. We are sons of God or of Satan according to whether we conform to goodness or to evil.

60. A wise man is one who pays attention to himself and is quick to separate himself from all defilement.

61. An obdurate soul does not notice when it is whipped and so is unaware of its benefactor.

62. A soiled garment excludes one from the divine wedding feast and makes one a communicant of outer darkness(cf Matt. 22:12-13).

63. He who fears God will pay careful attention to his soul and will free himself from communion with evil.

64. If you abandon God and are a slave to the passions you cannot reap God's mercy.

65. Even if we do not wish to believe Him, it was Jesus who said that no one can serve two masters (cf. Matt. 6:24).

66. A soul defiled by the passions becomes obdurate: it has to undergo knife and cautery before it recovers its faith.

67. Fearful afflictions await the hard of heart, for without great sufferings they cannot become pliable andresponsive.

68. A wise man pays careful attention to himself, and by freely choosing to suffer escapes the suffering that comesunsought.

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Second Century

69. Concern for one's soul means hardship and humility, for through these God forgives us all our sins.

70. Just as desire and rage-multiply our sins, so self-control and humility erase them.

71. Distress that accords with God's will shatters the heart, it is produced by the fear of punishment.

72. Such distress purifies the heart, expelling from it the defilements of sensual pleasure.

73. Patient endurance is the soul's struggle for virtue; where there is struggle for virtue, self-indulgence is banished.

74. All sin is due to sensual pleasure, all forgiveness to hardship and distress.

75. If you are not willing to repent through freely choosing to suffer, unsought sufferings will providentially beimposed on you.

76. Christ is the Savior of the whole world, and has conferred on men the gift of repentance so that they may besaved.

77. Repentance engenders the keeping of the commandments, and this in its turn purifies the soul.

78. The purification of the soul is release from the passions, and release from the passions gives birth to love.

79. A pure soul is one that loves God, and a pure intellect is one divorced from ignorance.

80. Struggle until death to fulfill the commandments: purified through them, you will enter into life.

81. Make the body serve the commandments, keeping it so far as possible free from sickness and sensual pleasure.

82. The flesh revolts when prayer, frugality and blessed stillness are neglected.

83. Blessed stillness gives birth to blessed children: self-control, love and pure prayer.

84. Spiritual reading and prayer purify the intellect, while love and self-control purify the soul's passible aspect.

85. Always keep the same measure of self-control; otherwise through irregularity you will go from one extreme toanother.

86. If you lay down mles for yourself, do not disobey yourself; for he who cheats himself is self-deluded.

87. The soul filled with passion lies in noetic darkness, for in such a soul the sun of righteousness has set.

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Second Century

88. A son of God is a person who through wisdom, power and righteousness has become like God.

89. The soul's disease is an evil disposition'^ while its death is sin put into action.

90. Spiritual poverty is complete dispassion; when the intellect has reached this state it abandons all worldly things.

91. Preserve the harmony of the soul's virtues, and it will bring forth the fruit of righteousness.

92. The contemplation of noetic realities is said to be bodiless because it is completely free of matter and form.

93. Just as the four elements are a combination of matter and form, so the bodies

that derive from them are likewisemade up of matter and form.

94. When in His compassion for man the Logos became flesh. He changed neither what He was nor what Hebecame.

95. Just as we speak of the one Christ as being 'from Godhead' and 'from manhood' and 'in Godhead' and 'inmanhood'', so we speak of Him as being 'from two natures' and ''in two natures'.

96. We confess that in Christ there is a single hypostasis, or subject, in two indivisibly united natures.

97. We glorify the one indivisible hypostasis of Christ and confess the union without confusion of the two natures.

98. We venerate the one essence of the Divinity in three Persons, or hypostases, and confess the coessential Trinity.

99. Particular to the three Persons are fatherhood, sonship and procession. Common to them are essence, nature,divinity and goodness.

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Third Century

1. Think good thoughts about what is good by nature, and think well of every man.

2. On the day of judgment we shall be asked by God to answer for our words, acts and thoughts.

3. Whether we think, speak or act in a good or an evil manner depends upon whether we cleave inwardly to virtue

or to vice.

4. An intellect dominated by the passions thinks base thoughts; words and

actions bring these thoughts into theopen.

5. An evil thought is preceded by passion. The passion is caused by the senses, but the misuse of the senses isclearly the fault of the intellect.

6. Shut out the senses, fight against prepossession and, with the commandments as your weapons, destroy thepassions.

7. Inveterate wickedness requires long practice of the virtues; for an engrained habit is not easily uprooted.

8. The forceful practice of self-control and love, patience and stillness, will destroy the passions hidden within us.

9. Impel your intellect continually to prayer and you will destroy the evil thoughts that beset your heart.

10. Ascetic practice requires long and patient endurance: assiduous struggle will slowly root out self-indulgence.

11. You will not find the rigors of the ascetic life hard to bear if you do all things with measure and by rule.

12. Maintain a regular level of ascetic practice and do not break your rule unless forced to do so.

13. Just as love and self-control destroy evil thought so contemplation and prayer destroy all self-exaltation.

14. Ascetic struggle - fasting, vigils, patience, forbearance -produces a clear conscience.

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Third Century

15. He who patiently endures unsought trials becomes humble, full of hope and

spiritually mature.

16. Patient endurance is a continuous effort for the soul; it is bom of suffering freely chosen and of trials that comeunsought.

17. Perseverance in the face of adversity dissolves evil, while unremitting patience destroys it utterly.

18. The experience of suffering afflicts the senses: distress annuls sensual pleasure.

19. There are four prevalent passions which God in His wisdom sets one against the other.

20. Distress checks sensual pleasure; the fear of punishment withers desire.

21. The wise intellect tests the soul and trains the body with all kinds of ascetic practice.

22. Prove yourself a monk, not outwardly, but inwardly, by freeing yourself from the passions.

23. The first renunciation is that of material things, the second that of the passions, the third that of ignorance.

24. It is not difficult to get rid of material things if you so desire; but only with great effort will you be able to getrid of thoughts about them.

25. Control desire and you will dominate anger; for desire gives rise to anger.

26. We may have freed ourselves from impassioned thoughts; but have we yet been granted pure and immaterialprayer?

27. Great is the intellect that is freed from the passions, has separated itself from created beings, and lives in God.

28. The person advancing in the spiritual life studies three things: the commandments, doctrine, and faith in theHoly Trinity.

29. An intellect stripped of the passions has its attention focused on three things:

passion-free conceptual images.

the contemplation of created beings, and its own light.

30. The foulest passions ore bidden within our souls; they are brought to light only when we scrutinize our actions.

31. Sometimes the intellect that has attained a partial dispassion will remain undisturbed; but this is because, in theabsence of the things that provoke it, it is not put to the test.

32. As has been said, our passions are roused through these[V2] 321

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three things: the memory, the body's temperament, and the senses.

33. The intellect that has shut out the senses, and has achieved a balance in the body's temperament, has to fightonly against its memories.

34. It is when self-control and spiritual love are missing that the passions are roused by the senses.

35. Moderate fasting, vigils and psalmody are natural means for achieving a balance in the body's temperament.

36. Three things upset the balance of the body's temperament: lack of restraint in our diet, a change in the weather,and the touch of the demonic powers.

37. Our memories can be stripped of passion through prayer, spiritual reading, self-control and love.

38. First shut out the senses through the practice of stillness and then fight against your memories by cultivating thevirtues.

39. Mental evil resides in the misuse of conceptual images; active sin consists in the misuse of material things.

40. To misuse conceptual images and material things is to use them in a profane and improper manner.

41. Reprehensible passions chain the intellect, binding it to sensible objects.

42. The person who is not affected either by material things, or by his memories of them, has attained perfectdispassion.

43. A saint-like soul helps its neighbor and when ill-treated by him is patient, enduring what it suffers at his hands.

44. Malicious thoughts are a fully existent form of evil: if you do not get rid of them you will not become a discipleof spiritual knowledge.

45. The person who listens to Christ fills himself with light; and if he imitates Christ, he reclaims himself.

46. Rancor is the soul's leprosy. The soul contracts it as the result of disgrace or punishment, or because ofsuspicious thoughts.

47. The Lord blinds the intellect that is jealous and resentful of its neighbor's blessings.

48. The tongue of a back-biting soul is three-pronged: it injures the speaker, the listener and sometimes the personbeing maligned.

49. He who prays for those who offend him is without rancor; and the unstinting giver is set free from it.[V2] 322

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Third Century

50. Hatred-for one's neighbor soul's death; the back-biting soul both suffers and inflicts such death.

51. Listlessness is an apathy of soul: and a soul becomes apathetic when sick with self-indulgence.

52. He who loves Jesus trains himself in suffering: perseverance in suffering dispels listlessness.

53. The soul is strengthened through ascetic suffering, and dispels listlessness by doing all things according tomeasure.

54. Control of the belly withers desire and keeps the intellect free from lecherous thoughts.

55. An intellect in control of itself is the temple of the Holy Spirit, but that of a glutton is like a nest of crows.

56. A surfeit of foods breeds desire; a deficiency sweetens even plain bread.

57. If you share secretly in the joy of someone you envy, you will be freed from your jealousy; and you will also befreed from your jealousy if you keep silent about the person you envy.

58. Shun whoever lives dissolutely, even if many hold him in high esteem.

59. Make a friend of the man who works hard and you will find protection.

60. The dissolute man is sold to many masters and lives his life in whatever way they lead him.

61. Such a man will treat you as a friend in the time of peace, but in the time of trial he will fight you as an enemy.

62. When his passions are quiescent, he will lay down his life for you; when they are roused, he will take it backagain.

63. A dissolute soul is as full of impure passions as waste land is full of thistles.

64. A wise intellect restrains the soul, keeps the body in subjection, and makes the passions its servants.

65. Our actions disclose what goes on within us, just as its fruit makes known a tree otherwise unknown to us.

66. The hypocrite, like the false prophet, is betrayed by his words and actions.

67. An intellect that does not use its intelligence fails to chastise the soul, and so prevents it from acquiring love andself-control.

68. The cause of depraved thoughts is an evil disposition made up of pride and boastfulness.[V2] 323

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Third Century

69. Pride and boastfulness are characterized by hypocrisy, guile, trickery, pretence and, worst of all, falsity.

70. These characteristics are aided and abetted by envy, strife, anger, resentment and rancor.

71. Such is the state of those who live dissolutely, and such are the treasures hidden in my heart (cf Matt. 12:35).

72. Hardship and humility save the soul and free it from all the passions.

73. A helpful word indicates an understanding mind; a good action reveals a saint-like soul.

74. An illumined intellect brings forth words of wisdom; a pure soul cultivates godlike thoughts.

75. The thoughts of a wise man are devoted to wisdom, and his words enlighten those who hear them.

76. A virtuous soul cultivates good thoughts; a soul full of evil breeds thoughts of depravity.

77. An impassioned soul produces evil thoughts: it is a fund of evil.

78. The virtues possess a fund of goodness from which the holy intellect brings forth blessings.

79. The intellect energized by divine love cultivates good thoughts about God;

but when impelled by self-love it

produces diabolic thoughts.

80. When the inteUect is moved by love for its neighbor, it always thinks well of him: but when it is under diabolicinfluence it entertains evil thoughts about him.

81. The virtues generate good thoughts; the commandments lead us to the virtues; the practice of the virtuesdepends on our own will and resolution.

82. As virtue and evil come and go, they dispose the soul either to goodness or to malice, prompting in it thecorresponding thoughts.

83. Evil begets evil thoughts; disobedience begets evil; the deceit of the senses gives, rise to disobedience; and thisdeceit derives from the intellect's neglect of its own salvation.

84. In the case of those advancing on the spiritual way, their attitude to good and evil is easily changed; but in thosewho have achieved perfection it is hard to shift.

85. The soul's strength is its firm state of virtue; on reaching

such a state one may say with the invincible apostle Paul; 'What can separate us from the love of Christ?" (Rom.8:35).

86. Self-love precedes all the passions, while last of all comes pride,

87. The three most common forms of desire have their origin in the passion of self-love.

88. These three forms are gluttony, self-esteem and avarice. All other impassioned thoughts follow in their wake.

though they do not all follow each of them.

The thought of unchastity follows that of gluttony; of pride, that of self-esteem. The others all follow the threemost common forms.

90. Thus thoughts of resentment, anger, rancor, envy, listless-ness and the rest all follow these three most commonforms.

A Prayer

91. Christ, Master of all, free us from all these destructive passions and the thoughts bom of them.

92. For Thy sake we came into being, so that we might delight in the paradise which Thou hast planted and inwhich Thou hast placed us.

93. We brought our present disgrace upon ourselves, preferring destruction to the delights of blessedness.

94. We have paid for this, for we have exchanged eternal life for death.

95. 0 Master, as once Thou hast looked on us, look on us now; as Thou becamest man, save all of us.

96. For Thou camest to save us who were lost. Do not exclude us from the company of those who are being saved.

97. Raise up our souls and save our bodies, cleansing us from all impurity.

98. Break the fetters of the passions that constrain us, as once Thou hast broken the ranks of the impure demons.

99. Free us from their tyranny, so that we may worship Thee alone, the eternal light.

lOO.Havmg risen from the dead and dancing with the angels in the blessed, eternal and indissoluble dance. Amen.

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1. The person who has broken the bonds of his inteUect's fawning friendship for the flesh has slain the body's evilacts through the life-giving Spirit.

2. Do not think that the intellect is free from its attachment to the flesh so long as it is still troubled by theactivities that pertain to the flesh.

3. Just as the senses and sensible objects pertain to the flesh, so the intellect and intelligible realities pertain to thesoul.

4. Withdraw your soul from the perception of sense objects, and the intellect will find itself in God and in therealm of intelligible realities.

5. Intelligible natures that can be grasped only by the intellect belong to the realm of divinity, while the senses andsense objects have been created for the service of the intellect.

6. Use the senses and sense objects as a means to spiritual contemplation but, on the contrary, do not use whatprovokes the desire of the flesh as food for the senses.

7. You have been commanded to mortify the acts of the body (cf. Col. 3:5) so that when the soul has been madedead to pleasure you may bring it back to life through your ascetic labors.

8. Be ruled by God and rule over your senses; and, being on a higher level, do not give authority to what is inferiorto you.

9. God, who is eternal, limitless and infinite, has promised eternal, limitless and inexpressible blessings to thosewho obey him.

10. The intellect's role is to live in God and to meditate on Him, His providence and His awesome Judgments.

1L You have the power to inchne either upwards or downwards: choose what is superior and you wiU bring what isinferior into subjection.

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12. Because they are the works of God, who is Himself good, the senses and sensible objects are good; but theycannot m any way be compared with the intellect and with intelligible realities.

13. The Lord has created intelligent and noetic beings with a capacity to receive the Spirit and to attain knowledgeof Himself; He has brought into existence the senses and sense objects to serve such beings.

14. Just as it is absurd to subject a good master to a worthless servant, so it is absurd to subject the deifomi intellectto the corruptible body.

15. An intellect that does not control the senses will fall into evil because of them: deceived by the pleasure of senseobjects, it depraves itself.

16. While controlling your senses, control your memory as well; for when its prepossessions are roused through thesenses they stir up the passions.

17. Keep your body under control, and pray constantly; in this way you will soon be free from the thoughts thatarise from your prepossessions.

18. Devote yourself ceaselessly to the words of God: application to them destroys the passions.

19. Spiritual reading, vigils, prayer and psalmody prevent the intellect from being deluded by the passions.

20. Just as spring stimulates the growth of plants, so dispassion stimulates the intellect to attains spiritualknowledge of created beings.

21. Keep the commandments, and you will find peace; love God, and you will attain spiritual knowledge.

22. You have been sentenced to eat the bread of spiritual knowledge with toil, struggle and the sweat of your face(cf Gen. 3:19).

23. Negligence led our first forefather to transgress, and instead of enjoying paradise he was condemned to die (cf.Gen. 3:22).

24. You, too, should keep control of Eve; and you should watch out for the serpent, lest she is deceived by it andgives you the fruit of the tree (cf. Gen. 3:1-5).

25. As by nature the soul gives life to the body, so virtue and spiritual knowledge give life to the soul.

26. A conceited intellect is a waterless cloud (cf. Jude, verse 12) carried along by the winds of self-esteem andpride.

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27. In controlling your self-esteem, beware of unchastity, so that you do not shun acclaim only to fall into dishonor.

28. Eschewing self-esteem, look to God, and beware lest you become presumptuous or unchaste.

29. A sign of self-esteem is an ostentatious manner; of pride, anger and scorn of others.

30. In cutting out gluttony, beware lest you seek the esteem of others, making a display of the pallor of your face.

31. To fast well is to enjoy simple food in small amounts and to shun other people's esteem.

32. After fasting until late in the day, do not eat your fill, lest in so doing you

build up again what you have pulleddown(cf Gal. 2:18).

33. If you do not drink wine, do not glut yourself with water either; for if you do you will be providing yourselfwith the same fuel for unchastity.

34. Pride deprives us of God's help, making us over-reliant on ourselves and arrogant towards other people.

35. There are two remedies against pride; and if you do not avail yourself of them you will find yourself given athird, far more painful to bear.

36. Prayer with tears, and having no scorn for anyone, destroy pride; but so do chastisements inflicted against ourwill.

37. Chastisement through the trials imposed on us is a spiritual rod, teaching us humility when in our foolishnesswe think too much of ourselves.

38. The intellect's task is to reject any thought that secretly vilifies a fellow being.

39. Just as the gardener who does not weed his garden chokes his vegetables, so the intellect that does not purify itsthoughts is wasting its efforts.

40. A wise man is one who accepts advice, especially that of a spiritual father counseling him in accordance withthe will of God.

41. A man deadened by the passions is impervious to advice and will not accept any spiritual correction.

42. He who does not accept advice will never go by the straight path, but will always find himself among cliffs andgorges.

43. The truly monk-like intellect is one that has renounced the senses and cannot stand even the thought of sensualpleasure.

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44. The truly physician-like intellect is one that first heals itself and then heals others of the diseases of which ithas been cured.

45. Search after virtue and do not be deprived of it, lest you live sordidly and die a wretched death.

46. Our Lord Jesus has given light to all men, but those who do not trust in Him bring darkness upon themselves.

47. Do not think that the loss of virtue is a minor matter, for it was through such a loss that death came into theworld.

48. Obedience to the commandments is the resurrection of the dead, for by nature life follows upon virtue.

49. When the intellect was deadened by the breaking of the commandment, the death of the body was a necessaryconsequence.

50. Just as Adam through transgressing became subject to death, so the Savior through obedience put death todeath.

51. Put evil to death so that you will not rise up dead and thus pass from a minor to a major death.

52. Because of Adam's transgression the Savior became man, so that by nullifying the sentence passed on us Hemight resurrect all of us.

53. He who has put his passions to death and overcome ignorance goes from life to life.

54. Search the Scriptures and you will find the commandments: do what they say and you will be freed from yourpassions.

55. Obedience to a commandment purifies the soul, and purification of the soul leads to its participation in light

56. The tree of life is the knowledge of God; when, being purified, you share in that knowledge you attainimmortality.

57. The first step in the practice of the virtues is faith in Christ; its consummation, the love of Christ.

58. Jesus is the Christ, our Lord and our God, who grants us faith in Him so that we may live.

59. He manifested Himself to us in soul, body and divinity so that, as God, He could deliver soul and body fromdeath.

60. Let us acquire faith so that we may attain love; for love gives birth to the illumination of spiritual knowledge.

61. The acquisition of faith leads successively to fear of God, restraint from sensual pleasure, the patient enduranceof suffering, hope in God, dispassion and love.

62. Genuine love gives birth to the spiritual knowledge of the

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created world. This is succeed by the desire of all desires: the grace of theology.

63. When (he intellect controls the passions it is doubtless, out of fear that it does so, for it believes is God's threats

and promises.

64. When you have been given faith, self-control is demanded from you; when self-control has become habitual, itnves birth to patient endurance, a disposition that gladly accepts suffering.

65. The sign of patient endurance is delight in suffering; and the intellect, trusting in this patient endurance, hopesto attain what is promised and to escape what is threatened.

66. The expectation of the blessings held in store links the intellect with what it expects. When it continuallymeditates on these blessings, it forgets the things of this world.

67. He who has tasted the things for which he hopes will spurn the things of this world: all his longing will be spenton what he hopes for.

68. It is God who has promised the blessings held in store; and the self-disciplined person who has faith in Godlongs for what is held in store as though it were present.

69. The sign that the intellect dwells among the blessings for which it hopes is its total oblivion to worldly thingsand the growth in its knowledge of what is held in store.

70. The dispassion taught by the God of truth is a noble quality; through it He fulfils the aspirations of the devoutsoul.

71. The blessings that lie in store for the inheritors of the promise are beyond eternity, before all ages, andtranscend both intellect and thought.

72. Let us regulate our lives according to the rules of true faith, so that we do not deviate into the passions and thusfail to attain what we hope for.

73. Jesus is the Christ, one of the Holy Trinity. You are destined to be His heir.

74. If God has taught you a spiritual knowledge of created beings, you will not doubt the words of Scriptureconcerning the blessings held in store.

75. According to the degree to which the intellect is stripped of the passions, the Holy Spirit initiates the intellectinto the mysteries of the age to be.

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76. The more the inteUect is purified, the more the soul is granted spiritual knowledge of divine principles.

77. He who has disciplined his body and dwells in a state of spiritual knowledge finds that through this knowledgehe is purified still further.

78. The intellect that begins to pursue divine wisdom starts with faith; it then passes through the intermediate stagesuntil it arrives once more at faith, though this time of the highest type.

79. Initially our search for wisdom is prompted by fear; but as we attain our goal we are led forward by love.

80. The intellect that begins its search for divine wisdom with simple faith will eventually attain a theology thattranscends the intellect and that is characterized by unremitting faith of the highest type and the contemplationof the invisible.

81. The divine principles contemplated by the saints do not reveal God's essence, but the qualities that appertain toHim.

82. Of the principles that appertain to God, some are to be understood affirmatively and others negatively.

83. For example, being, divinity, goodness and whatever else we attribute to God in a positive manner, orcataphatically, are to be understood affirmatively. Unongmateness, infinity, indefinable-ness and so on are to beunderstood in a negative manner, or apophatically.

84. Since the inmost divinity of the Holy Trinity is a single essence transcending intellect and thought, what has justbeen said, and other similar statements, refer to the qualities that appertain to the essence, and not to the essenceitself

85. Just as we speak of the single Godhead of the Holy Trinity, so we glorify the three Persons, or hypostases, ofthe one Godhead.

86. The affirmative and negative qualities mentioned above are to be understood as common to the holy andcoessential Trinity, and not as indicating the individual characteristics of the three Persons. Most of theseindividual characteristics are to be understood affirmatively, although some are to be understood negatively.

87. The individual characteristics of the divine Persons are fatherhood, sonship, procession, and whatever else canbe said of them individually.

A person may be defined as an essence with individual

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characteristics. Thus each person possesses both what is common to the essence and what belongs individually tothe person.

89. Of the qualities common to the Holy Trinity, those predicated of it negatively apply more aptly than thoseascribed to it positively. But this is not the case with the individual characteristics. As we noted, some of theseare expressed affirmatively and others negatively; 'begottenness' and 'unbegottenness' respectively areexamples of both. Thus unbegottenness' differs from 'begot-tenness' only as regards its meaning, not as regardsits aptness: the first term expresses the fact that the Father was not begotten and the second that the Son wasbegotten.

90. Verbs and nouns are used, as we said, to indicate the principles that in contemplation we apprehend asappertaining to the essence of the Holy Trinity, but do not refer to the essence itself. For the principles of theessence cannot be known by the intellect or expressed in words: they are known only to the Holy Trinity.

91. Just as the single essence of the Godhead is said to exist in three Persons, so the Holy Trinity is confessed tohave one essence.

92. We regard the Father as unoriginate and as the source: as unoriginate because He is unbegotten, and as thesource because He is the begetter of the Son and the sender forth of the Holy Spirit, both of whom are byessence from Him and in Him from all eternity.

93. Paradoxically, the One moves from itself into the Three and yet remains One,

while the Three return to the Oneand yet remain Three.

94. Again, the Son and the Spirit are regarded as not unoriginate, and yet as from all eternity. They are notunoriginate because the Father is their origm and source: but They are eternal in that They coexist with theFather, the one begotten by Him and the other proceeding from Him from all eternity.

90. The single divinity of the Trinity is undivided and the three Persons of the one divinity are unconfused.

96. The individual characteristics of the Father are described as unoriginateness and unbegottenness: of the Son, asco-presence in the source and as bemg begotten by it; and of the Holy Spirit, as co-presence in the source and asproceeding from it. The origin of the Son and Holy Spirit is not to be regarded as temporal: how could it be? Onthe contrary, the term "origin' indicates the source from

which Their existence is eternally derived, as light from the sun For They originate from that source according toTheir essence, although They are in no sense inferior or subsequent to it.

97. Each Person preserves His individual characteristics im-mutably and irremovably; and the common nature ofTheir essence, that is to say. Their divinity, is indivisible.

98. We confess Units- in Trinits' and Trinity in Unity, divided but without division and united but with distmctions.

99. The Father is the sole origm of all things. He is the origin of the Son and the Spirit as Their begetter and source.

coetemal, co-infinite, limitless, coessential and undivided. He is the origin of

created things, as the one whoproduces, provides for, and judges them through the Son in the Holy Spirit. "For all things are from Him andthrough Him, and have Him as their goal. To Him be glory throughout the ages. Amen' (Rom. 11:36).

100. Again, the Son and the Holy Spirit are said to be coetemal with the Father, but not co-unoriginate with Him.They are coetemal in that They coexist with the Father from eternity; but They are not co-unoriginate in thatThey are not without source: as has already been said. They are derived from Him as the light from the sun,even though They are not inferior or subsequent to Him. They are also said to be unoriginate in the sense thatThey do not have an origin in time. If this were not the case. They would be thought of as subject to time,whereas it is from Them that time itself derives. Thus They are unoriginate not with regard to Their source, butwith regard to time. For They exist prior to, and transcend, all time and all the ages; and it is from Them that alltime and all the ages are derived, together with everything that is in time and in the ages. This is because Theyare, as we said, coetemal with the Father; to Him, with Them, be glory and power through all the ages. Amen.

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St John of Damaskos

(c. 675-c. 749)

(Toliime 2, pp. 333-342)

Inroductory Note

On the Virtues and J Ices, a concise and clear summary of standard ascetic teaching, is ascribed by St Nikodimosto St John of Damaskos (c. 675-c. 749), author of the celebrated doctrinal compendium On the Orthodox Faith, butit also appears among the works attributed to St Athanasios of Alexandria (c. 296-373)^ and St Ephrem the Syrian(c. 306-373)." Probably it is not by any of these three, and its date and provenance remain hard to determine. Forhis analysis of temptation the author is clearly indebted to St Mark the Ascetic (? early fifth century) - whom,indeed, he cites by name in another connection - and probably also to St John Klimakos (? seventh century). Headopts Evagrios' teaching on the three aspects of the soul and the eight evil thoughts, and his remarks on self-lovesuggest an acquaintance with the writings of St Maximos. It has been argued

that the beginning and the end of thetreatise, on the virtues of the soul and the body, are of Syrian origin - which would account for the ascription toEphrem - and are possibly taken from John the Solitary (c. 500).^ St Nikodimos praises the treatise as 'a touchstone,discriminating with exactness between the tried and tested gold of the virtues and the copper alloy of the vices'.

'P.G. xxviii, 1396-1408.

^ Opera, vol, iii (Rome, 1746), pp. 429-35.

' I. Hausherr,yea« le Solitaire: Dialogue sur Fame et lespassions des hommes (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 120: Rome, 1939), p. 13.

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Man is a twofold being comprising soul and body, and has two orders of senses and two corresponding orders ofvirtues. The soul has five senses and the body five. The senses of the soul, which are also called the faculties, areintellect, reason, opinion, fantasy and sense-perception. The senses of the body are sight, smell, hearing, taste andtouch. The virtues which belong to these senses are twofold and so, too, are the vices. Everyone should know howmany virtues there are of the soul and how many of the body, and what kind of passions belong to the soul and whatkind to the body. The virtues which we ascribe to the soul are primarily the four cardinal virtues: courage, moraljudgment, self-restraint and justice. These give birth to the other virtues of the soul: faith, hope, love, prayer,humility, gentleness, long-suffering, forbearance, kindness, freedom from anger, knowledge of God, cheerfulness,simplicity, calmness, sincerity, freedom from vanity, freedom from pride, absence of envy, honesty, freedom fromavarice, compassion, mercifulness, generosity, fearlessness, freedom from dejection, deep compunction, modesty,reverence, desire for the blessings held in store, longing for the kingdom of God, and aspiration for divine sonship.

Besides these there are the bodily virtues or, rather, the tools or instruments of virtue. When used withunderstanding, in accordance with God's will, and

without the least hypocrisy or desire to win men's esteem, theymake it possible to advance in humility and dispassion. They are self-control, fasting, hunger, thirst, staying awake,keeping all-night vigils, constant kneeling, not washing, the wearing of a single garment, eating dry food, eatingslowly, drinking nothing but water, sleeping on the ground, poverty, total shedding of possessions, austerity,disregard of personal appearance, unselfishness, solitude, preserving stillness, not going out, enduring scarcity.

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St John of Damaskos

On the Virtues and the Vices

being self-supporting, silence, working with your own hands, and every kmd of hardship and physical asceticism,with other similar practices. When the body is strong and disturbed by carnal passions, they are all indispensable andextremely beneficial When the body is weak, however, and with the help of God has overcome these passions, suchpractices are not as vital as holy humility and thanksgiving, which suffices for everything.

Something should also be said about the vices or the passions of the soul and the body. The passions of the soul areforgetfulness, laziness and ignorance. When the soul's eye, the intellect, has been darkened by these three, the soulis dominated by all the other passions. These are impiety, false teaching or every kind of heresy, blasphemy, wrath,anger, bitterness, irritability, inhumanity, rancor, back-biting, censonousness, senseless dejection, fear, cowardice.

quarrelsomeness, jealousy, envy, self-esteem, pride, hypocrisy, falsehood, unbelief, greed, love of material things,attachment to worldly concerns, hstlessness, faint-heartedness, ingratitude, grumbling, vanity, conceit, pomposity,boastfulness, love of power, love of popularity, deceit, shamelessness, insensibility, flattery, treachery, pretence,indecision, assent to sins arising from the soul's passible aspect and dwelling on them continuously, wanderingthoughts, self-love, the mother of vices, avarice, the root of all evil (cf 1 Tim. 6:10) and, finally, malice and guile.

The passions of the body are gluttony, greed, over-indulgence, drunkenness, eating in secret, general softness ofliving, unchastity, adultery, licentiousness, uncleanness, incest, pederasty, bestiality, impure desires and everypassion which

is foul and unnatural, theft, sacrilege, robbery, murder, every kind of physical luxury and gratificationof the whims of the flesh (especially when the body is in good health), consulting oracles, casting spells, watchingfor omens and portents, self-adornment, ostentation, foolish display, use of cosmetics, painting the face, wastingtime, day-dreaming, trickery, impassioned misuse of the pleasures of this world and a life of bodily ease, which bycoarsening the intellect makes it cloddish and brute-like and never lets it raise itself towards God and the .practice ofthe virtues.

The roots or primary causes of all these passions are love of sensual pleasure, love of praise and love of materialwealth. Every evil has its origin in these. As Mark, wisest of the ascetics, says, a man cannot

commit a smgle sin unless the three powerful giants, forgetfulness, laziness and ignorance, first overpower him andenslave him. And these giants are the offspring of sensual pleasure, luxury, love of men's esteem, and distraction.The primary cause and vile mother of them all is self-love, which is a senseless love of one's body and animpassioned attachment to it. A dispersed and dissipated intellect given to frivolous talk and foul language producesmany vices and sins. Laughter and loose, immodest speech also lead to sin.

Moreover, impassioned love of sensual pleasure takes a great variety of forms: for when the soul slackens itsvigilance and is no longer strengthened by the fear of God, when it ceases to apply itself in its love for Christ to thepractice of the virtues, the pleasures which deceive it are many. For countless pleasures surge to and fro attractingthe eyes of the soul: pleasures of the body, of material things, of over-indulgence, of praise, laziness, anger, ofpower, avarice and greed. These pleasures have a glittering and attractive appearance which, though deceptive,readily seduces those who do not have any great love for virtue and are not willing to endure hardship for its sake.Every attachment to material things produces pleasure and delight in the man subject to such attachment, thusshowing how useless and harmful is the soul's desiring aspect when governed by passion. For when the man subjectto this aspect of the soul is

deprived of what he is wanting he is overcome by wrath, anger, resentment and rancor.And if through such senseless attachment some small habit gains the upper hand, the man to whom this happens isimperceptibly and irremediably held fast by the pleasure hidden in the attachment until he breaks free of it.

As we have said already, sensual concupiscent pleasure takes a great many forms. It finds satisfaction not only inunchastity and other bodily indulgences but also in every other passion. For self-restraint does not consist only inabstaining from unchastity and sexual pleasure; it also means renouncing all the other forms of indulgence too.Hence a man addicted to material wealth, avarice or greed is also licentious and dissolute. For just as the sensualman loves the pleasures of the body, so the avaricious man lusts for the pleasures of material possessions. Indeed,the latter is the more dissolute m that the force driving him is by nature less compelling. For

in all fairness a charioteer can be called unskilled, not when he fails to control a difficult and unmanageable horse,but only if he cannot control a much less spirited animal. It is quite obvious that a desire for material things isaltogether abnormal and contrary to nature, and that it derives its power not from nature but from a deliberate sinfulchoice; he who has yielded freely to such desire therefore sins mexcusably. So we must realize that the love ofpleasure is not limited merely to the over-indulgence and pampering of the body, but includes every craving andattachment of the soul, whatever the form or object of the desire.

In order to make it easier to recognize the passions in terms of the tripartite division of the soul we will classify thembriefly. The soul has three aspects: the intelligent, the mcensive and the desiring aspect. The sins of the intelligentaspect are unbelief, heresy, folly, blasphemy, ingratitude and assent to sins originating in the soul's passible aspect.These vices are cured through unwavering faith in God and in true, undeviating and orthodox teachings, through thecontinual study of the inspired utterances of the Spirit, through pure and ceaseless prayer, and through the offeringof thanks to God. The sins of the incensive aspect are heartlessness, hatred, lack of compassion, rancor, envy,murder and dwelling

constantly on such things. They are cured by deep sympathy for one's fellow men, love,gentleness, brotherly affection, compassion, forbearance and kindness. The sins of the desiring aspect are gluttony,greed, drunkenness, unchastity, adultery, uncleanliness, licentiousness, love of material things, and the desire forempty glory, gold, wealth and the pleasures of the flesh. These are cured through fasting, self-control, hardship, atotal shedding of possessions and their distribution to the poor, desire for the imperishable blessings held in store,longing for the kingdom of God, and aspiration for divine sonship.

You should also learn to distinguish the impassioned thoughts that promote every sin. The thoughts that encompassall evil are eight in number: those of gluttony, unchastity, avarice, anger, dejection, listlessness, self-esteem andpride. It does not lie within our power to decide whether or not these eight thoughts are going to arise and disturb us.But to dwell on them or not to dwell on them, to excite the passions or not to excite them, does lie within our power.In this connection, we should distinguish between seven different terms: provocation, coupling, wrestling, passion,assent (which

comes very close to performance), actualization and captivity. Provocation is amply a suggestion coming from theenemy, like 'do this' or "do that', such as our Lord Himself experienced when He heard the words 'Command thatthese stones become bread' (Matt. 4:3). As we have already said, it is not withm our power to prevent provocations.Couplmg is the acceptance of the thought suggested by the enemy. It means dwelling on the thought and choosingdeliberately to dally with it in a pleasurable manner. Passion is the state resulting from coupling with the thoughtprovoked by the enemy: it means letting the imagination brood on the thought continually. Wrestling is theresistance offered to the impassioned thought. It may result either in our destroying the passion in the thought - thatis to say, the impassioned thought - or in our assenting to it. As St Paul says, 'The flesh desires in a way that opposesthe Spirit, the Spirit in a way that opposes the flesh: the one is contrary to the other' (Gal. 5:17). Captivity is theforcible and compulsive abduction of the heart already dominated by prepossession and long habit. Assent is givingapproval to the passion inherent in the thought.

Actualization is putting the impassioned thought into effect once ithas received our assent. If we can confront the first of these things, the provocation, in a dispassionate way, orfirmly rebut it at the outset, we thereby cut off at once everything that comes after.

These eight passions should be destroyed as follows: gluttony by self-control: unchastity by desire for God andlonging for the blessings held in store; avarice by compassion for the poor; anger by goodwill and love for all men;worldly dejection by spiritual joy; listlessness by patience, perseverance and offering thanks to God; self-esteem bydoing good m secret and by praying constantly with a contrite heart; and pride by not judging or despising anyone inthe manner of the boastful Pharisee (cf. Luke 18:11-12), and by considering oneself the least of all men. When theintellect has been freed in this way from the passions we have described and been raised up to God, it willhenceforth live the life of blessedness, receiving the pledge of the Holy Spirit (cf. 2 Cor. 1:22). And when it departsthis life, dispassionate and full of true knowledge, it will stand before the light of the Holy Trinity and with thedivine angels will shine in glory through all eternity.

The soul, as we have already explained, has three aspects or

powers; the intelligent, the incensive and the desiring. When the incensive power is imbued with love and deepsympathy for one's fellow men, and desire with purity and self-restraint, the intelligence is illuminated. But whendislike of one's fellow men dominates the incensive power, and desire is dissolute, the intelligence is in darkness.The intelligence is healthy, restrained and enlightened when it has the passions under control, perceives the inner

essences of God's creatures spiritually, and is raised up towards the Blessed and Holy Trinity. The incensive powerfunctions in accordance with nature when it loves all men and does not bear a grievance or harbor malice againstanybody. Desire likewise conforms with nature when through humility, self-control and a total shedding ofpossessions, it kills the passions - that is, the pleasures of the flesh, and the appetite for material wealth and transientglory - and turns to the

love that is divine and immortal. For desire is drawn towards three things: the pleasure of theflesh, vain self-glory, and the acquisition of material wealth. As a result of this senseless appetite it scorns God andHis commandments, and forgets His generosity; it turns like a savage beast against its neighbor; it plunges theintelligence into darkness and prevents it from looking towards the truth. He who has acquired a spiritualunderstanding of this truth will share, even here on earth, m the kingdom of heaven and will live a blessed life inexpectation of the blessedness that awaits those who love God. May we too be worthy of that blessedness throughthe grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Virtue, however, can only be attained by unremitting effort. This means that we struggle all our life to pay closepractical attention to such thmgs as acts of compassion, self-control, prayer, love and the other general virtues. Aperson may practice these virtues to a greater or lesser degree. He may from time to time perform acts ofcompassion; if he does so only infrequently we cannot legitimately call him compassionate, especially if what hedoes is not done in a good manner and in a way that conforms with God's will. For the good is not good if it is notrightly done. It is really good, only if it is not done with the purpose of receiving some reward: as, for instance, thesearch for popularity or glory may be rewarded by fame, or by excessive gain, or by something else that is wrong.God is not interested in what happens to turn out to be good or in what appears to be good. He is interested in thepurpose for which a thing

is done. As the holy fathers say, when the intellect forgets the purpose of a religious observance, the outwardpractice of virtue loses its value. For whatever is done indiscriminately and without purpose is not only of no benefit- even though good in itself - but actually does harm. Conversely, what appears to be evil is really good if it is donefor a godly purpose and accords with God's will. The action of a man who goes into a brothel to rescue a prostitutefrom destruction is a case in point.

Hence it is clear that someone who occasionally shows compassion is not compassionate, and someone whooccasionally practices self-control is not self-

controlled. A compassionate and self-controlled man is someone whofully, persistently, and with unfailing discrimination strives all his life for total virtue; for discrimination is greaterthan any other virtue; and is the queen and crown of all the virtues. The same is true of the vices: we call a man afornicator, a drunkard or a liar not on account of a single lapse, but only when he keeps on falling into the sin inquestion and makes no attempt to correct himself.

There is something else which you must know if you really want to attain virtue and avoid sin. Just as the soul is

incomparably better than the body and in many major respects altogether more excellent and precious, so the virtuesof the soul are infinitely superior to the virtues of the body. This is especially true of those virtues which imitate Godand bear His name. Conversely, the vices of the soul are much worse than the passions of the body, both in theactions they produce and in the punishments they incur. I do not know why, but most people overlook this fact. Theytreat drunkenness, unchastity, adultery, theft and all such vices with great concern, avoiding them or punishing themas something whose very appearance is loathsome to most men. But the passions of the soul are much worse andmuch more serious then bodily passions. For they degrade men to the level of demons and lead them, insensible asthey are, to the eternal punishment reserved for all who obstinately cling to such vices. These passions of the soulare envy, rancor, malice, msensitivity, avarice - which according to the apostle is the root of all evil (cf 1 Tim. 6:10)- and all vices of a similar nature.

We have arranged our homily clearly and concisely, explaining each point in a simple manner, as far as oar lack ofknowledge permits, so that anyone can easily distinguish the various categories of

ever been faithful servants of Christ. For mercy is His and to Him are due all glory, honor and worship, togetherwith His unorigin-ate Father and His all-holy, blessed and life-creating Spirit, now and always and through all theages. Amen.

Abba Phihmon

(? 6* - 7* Century)

(Volume 2, pp. 343-357)

Inroductory Note

The Discourse that follows, unlike most of the material in the Philokalia, is narrative in form; doubtless it wasincluded by the editors because of the long and important passages on inward meditation and on watchfulness.Apart from what is recorded in the present text, nothing is known about Abba Philimon. The Discourse, whilestating that he lived in Egypt and was a priest, provides no clear indication of his date. Certainly he was earlier thanthe twelfth century, since the Discourse is mentioned by St Peter of Damaskos. Egypt seems in Philimon's day to bestill part of the Roman Empire, which suggests that he lived in the sixth century, or at the latest in the early seventhjust before the Arab conquest.^ The Jesus Prayer is cited by Philimon in what has come to be regarded as itsstandard form, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me': the Discourse seems to be the earliest sourceto cite explicitly this precise formula.

' Hieromonk [now Archbishop] Basile Krivocheine, 'Date du texte traditionnel de la "Priere de Jesus",' Messager de I'Exarchat du Patriarcherusse en Europe occidentale 7-8 (1951), pp. 55-59; I. Hausherr, The Nome of Jesus, trans, by C. Cummings (Cistercian Studies Series AA:Kalamazoo, 1978), pp. 270-7.

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Abba Philimon

A Discourse on Abba Philimon

It is said that Abba Philimon, the anchorite, hved for a long time enclosed in a certain cave not far from the Lavra ofthe Romans. There he engaged in the life of ascetic struggle, always asking himself the question which, it isreported, the great Arsenics used to put to himself: "Philimon, why did you come here?" He

used to plait ropes andmake baskets, giving them to the steward of the Lavra in exchange for a small ration of bread. He ate only bread andsalt, and even that not every day. In this way he took no thought for the flesh (cf Rom. 13:14) but, initiated intoineffable mysteries through the pursuit of contemplation, he was enveloped by divine light and established in a stateof joyfulness. When he went to church on Saturdays and Sundays he walked alone in deep thought, allowing no oneto approach him lest his concentration should be interrupted. In church he stood in a comer, keeping his face turnedto the ground and shedding streams of tears. For, like the holy fathers, and especially like his great model Arsenios,he was always full of contrition and kept the thought of death continually in his mind.

When a heresy arose in Alexandria and the surrounding area, Philimon left his cave and went to the Lavra near thatof Nikanor. There he was welcomed by the blessed Paulinos, who gave him his own retreat and enabled him tofollow a life of complete stillness. For a whole year Paulinos allowed absolutely no one to approach him, and hehimself disturbed him only when he had to give him bread.

On the feast of the holy resurrection of Christ, Philimon and Paulinos were talking when the subject of the eremiticalstate came

up. Philimon knew that Paulinos, too, aspired to this state; and with this in mmd he implanted in him teachings takenfrom Scripture and the fathers that emphasized, as Moses had done, how impossible it is to conform to God withoutcomplete stillness; how stillness gives birth to ascetic effort, ascetic effort to tears, tears to awe, awe to humility,humility to foresight, foresight to love; and how love restores the soul to health and makes it dispassionate, so that

one then knows that one is not far from God.

He used to say to Pauhnos: 'You must purify your intellect completely through stillness and engage it ceaselessly inspiritual work. For just as the eye is attentive to sensible things and is fascinated by what it sees, so the purifiedintellect is attentive to intelligible realities and becomes so rapt by spiritual contemplation

that it is hard to tear itaway. And the more the intellect is stripped of the passions and purified through stillness, the greater the spiritualknowledge it is found worthy to receive. The intellect is perfect when it transcends knowledge of created things andis united with God: having then attained a royal dignity it no longer allows itself to be pauperized or aroused bylower desires, even if offered all the kingdoms of the world. If, therefore, you want to acquire all these virtues, bedetached from every man, flee the world and sedulously follow the path of the saints. Dress shabbily, behavesimply, speak unaffectedly, do not be haughty in the way you walk, live in poverty and let yourself be despised byeveryone. Above all, guard the intellect and be watchful, patiently enduring indigence and hardship, and keepingintact and undisturbed the spiritual blessings that you have been granted. Pay strict attention to yourself, notallowing any sensual pleasure to infiltrate. For the soul's passions are allayed by stillness; but when they arestimulated and aroused they grow more savage and force us into greater sm; and they become hard to cure, like thebody's wounds when they are scratched and chafed. Even an idle word can make the intellect forget God, thedemons enforcing this with the compliance of the senses.

'Great struggle and awe are needed to guard the soul. You have to divorce your self from the whole world andsunder your soul's affection for the body. You have to become citiless, homeless, possessionless, free from avarice,from worldly concerns and society, humble, compassionate, good, gentle, still, ready to receive in your heart thestamp of divine knowledge. You cannot write

on wax unless you have first expunged the letters written on it. Basil the Great teaches us these things.

'The saints were people of this kind. They were totally severed from the ways of the world, and by keeping thevision of heaven unsullied in themselves they made its light shine by observing the divine laws. And havingmortified their earthly aspects (cf Col. 3:5) through self-control and through awe and love for God, they wereradiant with holy words and actions. For through unceasing prayer and the study of the divine Scriptures the soul'snoetic eyes are opened,

and they see the King of the celestial powers, and great joy and fierce longing bum intenselyin the soul; and as the flesh, too, is taken up by the Spirit, man becomes wholly spiritual. These are the things whichthose who in solitude practice blessed stillness and the strictest way of life, and who have separated themselves fromall human solace, confess openly to the Lord in heaven alone."

When the good brother heard this, his soul was wounded by divine longing; and he and Abba Philimon went to live

in Sketis where the greatest of the holy fathers had pursued the path of sanctity. They settled in the Lavra of St Johnthe Small, and asked the steward of the Lavra to see to their needs, as they wished to lead a life of stillness. And bythe grace of God they lived in complete stillness, unfailingly attending church on Saturdays and Sundays but onother days of the week staying in their cells, praying and fulfilling their rule.

The rule of the holy Elder was as follows. During the night he quietly chanted the entire Psalter and the Biblicalcanticles, and recited part of the Gospels. Then he sat down and intently repeated "Lord have mercy" for as long ashe could. After that he slept, rising towards dawn to chant the First Hour. Then he again sat down, facing eastward,and alternately chanted psalms and recited by heart sections of the Epistles and Gospels. He spent the whole day inthis manner, chanting and praying unceasingly, and being nourished by the contemplation of heavenly things. Hisintellect was often lifted up to contemplation, and he did not know if he was still on earth.

His brother, seeing him devoted so unremittingly to this rule and completely transformed by divine thoughts, said tohim: 'Why, father, do you exhaust yourself so much at your age, disciplining your

Body and bringing it into subjection?' (cf. 1 Cor. 9:27). And he replied: 'Believe me, my son, God has placed suchlove for my rule in my soul that I lack the strength to satisfy the longing within me. Yet longing for God and hope ofthe blessings held in store triumph over bodily weakness.' Thus at all times, even

when he was eating, he raised hisintellect up to the heavens on the wings of his longing.

Once a certain brother who lived with him asked him: 'What is the mystery of contemplation?' Realizing that hewas intent on learning, the Elder replied: 'I tell you, my son, that when one's intellect is completely pure, Godreveals to him the visions that are granted to the ministering powers and angelic hosts." The same brother also asked:'Why, father, do you find more joy in the psalms than in any other part of divine Scripture? And why, when quietlychanting them, do you say the words as though you were speaking with someone?' And Abba Philimon replied: "Myson, God has impressed the power of the psalms on my poor soul as He did on the soul of the prophet David. Icannot be separated from the sweetness of the visions about which they speak: they embrace all Scripture.' Heconfessed these things with great humility, after being much pressed, and then only for the benefit of the questioner.

A brother named John came from the coast to Father Philimon and, clasping his feet, said to him: "What shall I do tobe saved? For my intellect vacillates to and fro and strays after all the wrong things." After a pause, the fatherreplied: "This is one of the outer passions and it stays with you because you still have not acquired a perfect longingfor God. The warmth of this longing and of the knowledge of God has not yet come to you." The brother said to him:'What shall I do, father?' Abba Philimon replied; 'Meditate inwardly for a while, deep in your heart; for this cancleanse your intellect of these things.' The brother, not understanding what was said, asked the Elder: 'What isinward meditation, father?' The Elder replied: 'Keep watch in your heart; and with watchfulness say in your mindwith awe and trembling "'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me." For this is the advice which the blessed

Diadochos gave to beginners.

The brother departed; and with the help of God and the Elder's prayers he found stillness and for a while was filledwith sweetness

by this meditation. But then it suddenly left him and he could, not practice it or pray watchfully. So he went again tothe Elder and told him what had happened. And the Elder said to him: 'You have had a brief taste of stillness andinner work, and ha\'e experienced the sweetness that comes from them. This is what you should always be doing inyour heart: whether eating or drinking, in company or outside your cell, or on a journey, repeat that prayer with awatchful mind and an undeflected intellect; also chant, and meditate on prayers and psalms. Even when carrying outneedful tasks, do not let your intellect be idle but keep it meditating inwardly and praying. For in this way you cangrasp the depths of divine Scripture and the power hidden in it, and give unceasing work to the intellect, thusfulfilling the apostolic commando "Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17). Pay strict attention to your heart andwatch over it, so that it does not give admittance to thoughts that are evil or in any way vain and useless. Withoutinterruption, whether asleep or awake, eating, drinking, or to company, let your heart inwardly and mentally at timesbe meditating on the psalms, at other times be repeating the prayer, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercyupon me." And when you chant, make sure that your mouth is not saying one thing while your mind is thinkingabout another.'

Again the brother said: 'In my sleep I see many vain fantasies." And the Elder said to him: 'Don't be sluggish orneglectful. Before going to sleep, say many prayers in your heart, fight against evil thoughts and don't be deluded bythe devil's demands; then God will receive you into His presence. If you possibly can, sleep only after reciting thepsalms and after inward meditation. Don't be caught off your guard, letting your mind admit strange thoughts; butlie down meditating on the thought of your prayer, so that when you sleep it may be conjoined with you and whenyou awake it may commune with you (cf Prov. 6:22). Also, recite the holy Creed of the Orthodox faith before youfall asleep. For true belief in God is the source and guard of all blessings.'

On another occasion the brother asked Abba Philimon: 'In your love, father, explain to me the work m which yourintellect is engaged. Then I too may be saved." And the Elder said: 'Why are you curious about these things?" Thebrother got up and, clasping and kissing the saint's feet, he begged for an answer. After a long time, the Elder said:'You cannot yet grasp it: for only a person estab-

lished in righteousness can give to each of the senses the work proper to it. And you have to be completely purged ofvain worldly thoughts before you are found worthy of this gift. So if you want such things, practice the inwardmeditation with a pure heart. For if you pray ceaselessly and meditate on the Scriptures, your soul's noetic eyes areopened, and there is great joy in the soul and a certain keen and ineffable longmg, even the flesh being kindled bythe Spirit, so that the whole man becomes spiritual. Whether it is at night or during the day that God grants you thegift of praying with a pure intellect, undistractedly, put aside your own rule, and reach towards God with all yourstrength, cleaving to Him. And He will illumine your heart about the spiritual work which you should undertake.'And he added: 'A certain elder once came to me and, on my asking him about the state of his intellect, he said: "Fortwo years I entreated God in my whole heart, unremittingly asking Him to imprint in my heart continuously andundistractedly the prayer which He Himself gave to His disciples: and seeing my struggle and patient endurance, themunificent Lord granted me this request." "

Abba Philimon also said this: 'Thoughts about vain things are sicknesses of an idle and sluggish soul. We must,then, as Scripture enjoins, guard our intellect diligently (cf. Prov. 4:23), chanting undistractedly and withunderstanding, and praying with a pure intellect. God wants us to show our zeal for Him first by our outwardasceticism, and then by our love and unceasing prayer; and He provides the path of salvation. The only path leadingto heaven is that of complete stillness, the avoidance of all evil, the acquisition of blessings, perfect love towardsGod and communion with Him in holiness and righteousness. If a man has attained these things he will soon ascendto the divine realm. Yet the person who aspires to this realm must first mortify his earthly aspects (cf. Col. 3:5). Forwhen our soul rejoices in the contemplation of true goodness, it does not return to any of the passions energized bysensual or bodily pleasure; on the contrary, it turns away from all such pleasure and receives the manifestation ofGod With a pure and undefiled mind.

'It is only after we have guarded ourselves rigorously, endured bodily suffering and purified the soul, that Godcomes to dwell in our hearts, making it possible for us to fulfill His commandments without going astray. HeHimself will then

teach us how to hold

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Abba Philimon

A Discourse on Abba Philimon

fast to His laws;' sending forth His own energies, like rays of the sun, through the grace of the Spirit implanted inus. By way of trials and sufferings we must purify the divine image in us m accordance with which we possessintelligence and are able to receive understanding and the likeness to God; for it is by reforgmg our senses in thefurnace of our trials that we free them from all defilement and assume our royal dignity. God created human nature apartaker of every divine blessing, able to contemplate spiritually the angelic choirs, the splendor of the dominions.

the spiritual powers, principalities and authorities, the unapproachable light, and the refulgent glory. Should youachieve some virtue, do not regard yourself as superior to your brother, thinking that you have succeeded whereas hehas been negligent; for this is the beginning of pride. Be extremely careful not to do anything simply in order to gainthe esteem or goodwill of others. When you are struggling with some passion, do not flinch or become apathetic ifthe battle continues: but rise up and cast yourself before God, repeating with all your heart the prophet's words, "0Lord, judge those who injure me (Ps. 35:1. LXX): for I cannot defeat them." And He, seeing your humility, willquickly send you His help. And when you are walking along the road with someone, do not indulge in idle talk, butkeep your intellect employed in the spiritual work in which it was previously engaged, so that this work becomeshabitual to it and makes it forget worldly pleasures, anchoring it in the harbor of dispassion.'

When he had taught the brother these and many other things, Abba Philimon let him go. But after a short time thebrother came back to him and began questioning him, saying: "What must I do, father? During my night rule sleepweighs me down and does not allow me to pray with inner watchfulness, or to keep vigil beyond the regular period.And when I sing psalms, I want to take up manual work." Abba Philimon said: 'When you are able to pray withinner watchfulness, do not engage in manual work. But if you are weighed down by listlessness, move about a little,so as to rid yourself of it, and take up manual

work.'

The brother again asked him: 'Father, are you not yourself weighed down by sleep while practicing your rule?' Hereplied: "Hardly ever. But if sleep does sometimes lay hold on me a little, I move about and recite from the Gospelof John, from the beginning, turning the mind's eyes towards God; and sleepiness at once

disappears. I do the same with regard to evil thoughts: when such a thought comes, I encounter it like fire with tears,and it disappears. You cannot as yet defend yourself in this manner; but always meditate inwardly and say the dailyprayers laid down by the holy fathers. By this I mean, try to recite the Third, Sixth, and Ninth Hours, Vespers andthe night services. And, so far as you can, do nothing simply to gain the esteem or goodwill of others, and never bearill will towards your brother, lest you separate yourself from God. Strive to keep your mind undistracted, alwaysbeing attentive to your inner thoughts. When you are in church, and are going to partake of the divine mysteries ofChrist, do not go out until you have attained complete peace. Stand in one place, and do not leave it until thedismissal. Think that you are standing in heaven, and that in the company of the holy angels you are meeting Godand receiving Him in your heart. Prepare yourself with great awe and trembling, lest you mingle with the holypowers unworthily.' Arming the brother with these counsels and commending him to the Lord and to the Spirit ofHis grace (cf Acts 20:32), Abba Philimon let him go.

The brother who lived with the Abba also related the following:

"Once, as I sat near him, I asked him whether he had been tempted by the wiles of the demons while dwelling in thedesert. And he replied: "Forgive me, brother; but if God should let the temptations to which I have been subjected

by the devil come to you, I do not think you would be able to bear their venom. I am in my seventieth year, or older.Enduring a great number of trials while dwelling in extreme stillness in solitary places, I was much tempted andsuffered

greatly. But nothing is to be gained by speaking of such bitter things to people who as yet have noexperience of stillness. When tempted, I always did this: I put all my hope in God, for it was to Him that I made myvows of renunciation. And He at once delivered me from all my distress. Because of this, brother, I no longer takethought for myself. I know that He takes thought for me, and so I bear more lightly the trials that come upon me.The only thing I offer from myself is unceasing prayer. I know that the more the suffering, the greater the reward forhim who endures it. It is a means to reconciliation with the righteous Judge.

'"Aware of this, brother, do not grow slack. Recognize that you are fighting in the thick of the battle and that manyothers, too, are

fighting for us against God's enemy. How could we dare to fight against so fearful an enemy of mankind unless thestrong right arm of the Divine Logos upheld us, protecting and sheltering us? How could human nature 'withstandhis ploys? 'Who', says Job, 'can strip off his outer garment? And who can penetrate the fold of his breastplate?Burning torches pour from his mouth, he hurls forth blazing coals. Out of his nostrils come smoke of burning soot,with the fire of charcoal. His breath is charcoal, a flame comes from his mouth, power lodges in his neck.Destruction runs before him. His heart is hard as stone, it stands like an unyielding anvil. He makes the deep boillike a cauldron; he regards the sea as a pot of ointment, and the nether deep as a captive. He sees every high thing;and he is king of all that is in the waters' (Job 41:13, 19-22, 24, 31-32, 34. LXX). This passage describes themonstrous tyrant against whom we fight. Yet those who lawfully engage in the solitary life soon defeat him: they donot possess anything that is his; they have renounced the world and are resolute in virtue; and they have Godfighting for them. Who has turned to the Lord with awe and has not been transformed in his nature? Who hasillumined himself with the light of divine laws and actions, and has not made his soul radiant with divineintellections and thoughts? His soul is not idle, for God prompts his intellect to long insatiably for light. Stronglyenergized in this way, the soul is not allowed by the spirit to grow flabby with the passions; but like a king who, fullof

fire and fury against his enemies, strikes them mercilessly and never retreats, it emerges triumphant, lifting itshands to heaven through the practice of the virtues and the prayer of the intellect." "

The same brother also spoke as follows about the Elder; 'In addition to his other virtues, Abba Philimon possessedthis characteristic: he would never listen to idle talk. If someone inadvertently said something which was of nobenefit to the soul, he did not respond at all. When I went away on some duty, he did not ask: "Why are you gomgaway?"; nor, when I returned, did he ask: "Where are you coming from?" Or "What have you been doing?" Once,indeed, I had to go to Alexandria by ship; and from there I went to Constantinople on a church matter. I saidgoodbye to the brethren at Alexandria, but told Abba Philimon nothing about my journey. After spending quite atime in Constantinople, I returned to him in Sketis. When he saw me, he was filled with joy and, after greeting

me, he said a prayer. Then he sat down and, without asking me anything at aU, continued his contemplation.

'On one occasion, wanting to test him, for days I did not give him any bread to eat. And he did not ask for any, orsay anything. After this I bowed low to him and said: "Tell me, father, were you distressed that I did not bring youyour food, as I usually do?" And he replied: "Forgive me, brother, even if for twenty days you did not bring me anybread, I would not ask you for it: so long as my soul can last out, so can my body." To such a degree was heabsorbed in the contemplation of true goodness.'

'He also used to say: "Since I came to Sketis, I have not allowed my thought to go beyond my cell: nor have Ipermitted my mind to dwell on anything except the fear of God and the judgment of the age to be. for I havemeditated only on the sentence which threatens sinners, on the eternal fire and the outer darkness, on the state of thesouls of sinners and of the righteous, and on the blessings laid up for the righteous, each receiving 'his own paymentfor his own labor' (1 Cor. 3:8): one for his growing load of suffering, another for his acts of compassion and for hisunfeigned love, another for his total shedding of possessions and renunciation

of the whole world, another for hishumility and consummate stillness, another for his extreme obedience, another for his voluntary exile. Ponderingthese things, I constrain all 'other thoughts: and I can no longer be with people or concern my intellect with them,lest I be cut off from more divine meditations."

'He also spoke of a certain solitary who had attained dispassion and used to receive bread from the hand of an angel:but he grew negligent and so was deprived of this honor. For when the soul slackens the intellect's concentration,darkness comes over it. Where God does not illumine, everything is confused, as in darkness: and the soul is unableto look only at God and tremble at His words. "I am a God close at hand, says the Lord, not a distant God. Can aman hide himself in secret, and I not see him? Do I not fill heaven and earth? says the Lord" (Jer. 23:23-24. LXX).He also recalled many others who had similar experiences, among them Solomon. For Solomon, he said, hadreceived such wisdom and been so glorified by men that he was like the morning-star and illumined all with thesplendor of his wisdom: yet for the sake of a little sensual pleasure he lost that glory (cf. 1 Kings 11:1-11).Negligence

is to be dreaded. We must pray unceasingly lest some thought comes and separates us from God, distracting our

intellect from Him. For the pure heart, being completely receptive to the Holy Spirit, mirrors God in His entirety.

'When I heard these things', said the brother, "and saw his actions, I realized that all fleshly passions wereinoperative in him. His desire was always fixed on higher things, so that he was continually transformed by thedivine Spirit, sighing with "cries that cannot be uttered" (Rom. 8:26), concentrating himself within himself,assessing himself, and struggling to prevent anything from clouding his mind's purity and from defiling himimperceptibly.

"Seeing all this and spurred to emulate his achievements, I was continually prompted to question him. "How, likeyou, can I acquire a pure intellect?" I asked. And he replied: ""You have to struggle. The heart has to strive and

tosuffer. Things worth striving and suffering for do not come to us if we sleep or are indolent. Even earth's blessingsdo not come to us without effort on our part. If you want to develop spiritually you must above all renounce yourown will; you must acquire a heart that is sorrowful and must rid yourself of all possessions, giving attention not tothe sms of others but to your own sins, weeping over them day and night; and you must not be emotionally attachedto anyone. For a soul harrowed by what it has done and pricked to the heart by the memory of past sins, is dead tothe world and the world to it; that is to say, all passions of the flesh become inoperative, and man becomes inopera-tive in relation to them. For he who renounces the world, ranging himself with Christ and devoting himself tostillness, loves God; he guards the divine image in himself and enriches his likeness to God, receiving from Him thehelp of the Spirit and becoming an abode of God and not of demons; and he acts righteously in God's sight. A soulpurified from the world and free from the defilements of the flesh, 'having no spot or wrinkle' (Eph. 5:27), will winthe crown of righteousness and shine with the beauty of virtue.

' "But if when you set out On the path of renunciation there is no sorrow in your heart, no spiritual tears orremembrance of endless punishment, no true stillness or persistent prayer, no psalmody and meditation on the divineScriptures; if none of these things has become habitual in you, so that whether you like it or not they are forced onyou by the unremitting perseverance of the intellect; and

if awe of God does not grow in your mind, then you are still attached to the world and your intellect cannot be purewhen you pray. True devoutness and awe of God purify the soul from the" passions, render the intellect free, lead itto natural contemplation, and make it apt for theology. This it experiences in the form of bliss, that provides thosewho share in it with a foretaste of the bliss held in store and keeps the soul in a state of tranquility.

' "Let us, then, do all we can to cultivate the virtues, for in this way we may attain true devoutness, that mentalpurity whose fruit is natural and theological contemplation. As a great theologian puts it, it is by practicing thevirtues that we

ascend to contemplation. Hence, if we neglect such practice we will be destitute of all wisdom. Foreven if we reach the height of virtue, ascetic effort is still needed in order to curb the disorderly impulses of the body

and to keep a watch on our thoughts. Only thus may Christ to some small extent dwell in us. As we develop inrighteousness, so we develop in spiritual courage; and when the intellect has been perfected, it unites wholly withGod and is illumined by divine light, and the most hidden mysteries are revealed to it. Then it truly learns wherewisdom and power lie, and that understanding which comprehends everything, and 'length of days and life, and thelight of the eyes and peace' (Bamch 3:14). While it is still fighting against the passions it cannot as yet enjoy thesethings. For virtues and vices blind the intellect: vices prevent it from seeing the virtues, and virtues prevent it fromseeing vices. But once the battle is over and it is found worthy of spiritual gifts, then it becomes wholly luminous,powerfully energized by grace and rooted in the contemplation of spiritual realities. A person in whom this happensis not attached to the things of this world but has passed from death to life.

' "The person pursuing the spiritual life and drawing close to God must, therefore, have a chaste heart and a puretongue so that his words, in their purity, are fit for praising God. A soul that cleaves to God continuously communeswith Him.

' "Thus, brethren, let our desire be to attain the summit of the virtues, and not to remain earth-bound and attached tothe passions. For the person engaged in spiritual struggle who has drawn close to God, who partakes of the holylight and is wounded by his longing

for it, delights in the Lord with an inconceivable spiritual joy. It is as the psalm says: 'Delight m the Lord, and mayHe grant you the petitions of your heart... May He reveal your righteousness like the light, and your judgment likethe noonday' (cf Ps. 37:4, 6. LXX). For what longing of the soul is as unbearably strong as that which Godpromotes in it when it is purged of every vice and sincerely declares: 'I am wounded by love" (Song of Songs 5:8.LXX)? The

radiance of divine beauty is wholly inexpressible: words cannot describe it, nor the ear grasp it. Tocompare the true light to the rays of the morning star or the brightness of the moon or the light of the sun is to failtotally to do justice to its glory and is as inadequate as comparing a pitch-black moonless night to the clearest ofnoons. This is what St Basil, the great teacher, learnt from experience and subsequently taught us."

The brother who lived with Abba Philimon related these and many other things. But equally wonderful, and a greatproof of his humility, is the fact that, although Abba Philimon had long been a presbyter and both his conduct andknowledge were of a celestial order, he held back from fulfilling his priestly functions to such an extent that in hismany years of spiritual struggles he hardly ever consented to approach the altar; and in spite of the strictness of hislife, he never partook of the divine mysteries if he had been talking with other people, even though he had not saidanything worldly and he had spoken only to help those who questioned him. When he was going to partake of thedivine mysteries, he supplicated God with prayers, chanting, and confession of sins. During the service, he was fullof fear when the priest intoned (he words, "Holy things to the holy.' For he used to say that the whole church wasthen filled with holy angels, and that the King of the celestial powers Himself was invisibly celebrating, transformed

in our hearts into body and blood. It was on account of this that he said that we should dare to partake of theimmaculate mysteries of Christ only when in a chaste and pure state, as it were outside the flesh and free from allhesitation and doubt; in this way we would participate in the illumination that comes from them. Many of the holyfathers saw angels watching over them, and so they maintained silence, not entering into conversation with anyone.

A Discourse on Abba Philimon

The brother also said that when Abba Philimon had to sell his handiwork, he pretended to be a fool, in case speakingand answering questions might lead him into some lie, or oath, or chatter, or some other kind of sin. Wheneveranyone bought anything he simply paid what he thought fit. The Abba, this truly wise

man, made small baskets, andaccepted gratefully whatever was given, saying absolutely nothing.

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St Theognostos

(? 14"'Century)

(Volume 2, pp. 358-377)

Inroductory Note

St Nikodimos, while expressing reservations about the date of the text that follows, is inclined to ascribe it toTheognostos of Alexandria (third century). This, however, cannot be the case, since the author quotes St John ofDamaskos (§ 73), and so is not earlier than the second half of the eighth century; perhaps he lived in thefourteenth.^ The chief originality of the work lies in its comments on priesthood and Eucharist. Theognostos washimself a priest (§ 72), and seems to envisage a daily celebration of the Divine Liturgy (§ 14.). The long passage (§26) from St John of Karpathos is probably a later insertion, and not part of Theognostos' own text.

' See J. Gouillard, 'L'acrostiche spirituel de Theognoste (XIV s.?)', Echos d'Orient xxxix (1940), pp. 126-37.

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St Theognostos

On the Practice of the Virtues,Contemplation and the Priesthood

L When you are completely detached from all earthly things and when, your conscience clear, you are at anymoment ready in heart to leave this present life

and to dwell with the Lord, then you may recognize that youhave acquired true virtue. If you want to be known to God, do all that you can to remain unknown to men.

2. Watch out for any unnecessary demands coming from the body and ignore them, lest they should lead you torelax your efforts before you have attained dispassion. Regard as loss, not the privation of sensual pleasure, butthe failure to attain higher things as a result of having indulged in such pleasure.

3. Consciously look on yourself as an ant or a. worm, so that you can become a man formed by God. If you fail todo the first, the second cannot happen. The lower you descend, the higher you ascend; and when, like thepsalmist, you regard yourself as nothing before the Lord (cf Ps. 39:5), then miperceptibly you will grow great.And when you begin to realize that you have nothing and know nothing, then you will become rich in the Lordthrough practice of the virtues and spiritual knowledge.

4. 'Break the arm of the sinful and evil man" (Ps. 10:15), by which I mean the sensual pleasure and evil fromwhich all vice arises. Break it through self-control and the innocence bom of humility, so that when youractions are assessed and judged, no sin will be found in you, however rigorous the search. For our sms areeradicated once we come to hate what causes them and to do battle against it, repairing earlier defeat with finalvictory.

5. Nothing is better than pure prayer. From it, as from a spring.

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St Theognostos

On the Practice of the Virtues,Contemplation and the Priesthood

come the virtues: understanding and gentleness, love and self-control, and the support and encouragement that Godgrants in response to tears. The beauty of pure prayer is made manifest when our mind dwells in the realm ofintelligible realities alone and our longing to attain what is divine is endless. Then the intellect, tracking its Masterthrough the contemplation of created beings, and ardently thirsting to find and see Him who cannot be seen, or elsecontemplating the darkness that is His secret place (cf Ps. 18:11), in awe withdraws again into itself, for the momentsatisfied and encouraged by the vision revealed to it for its

own benefit; but it is full of hope that it will reach theobject of its desire when, set free from appearances and the shadow-like fantasies seen indistinctly, as m a mirror, it

is granted a pure unceasing vision 'face to face' (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12).

6. Do not try to embark on the higher forms of contemplation before you have achieved complete dispassion, anddo not pursue what lies as yet beyond your reach. If your wish is to become a theologian and a contemplative,ascend by the path of ascetic practice and through self-purification acquire what is pure. Do not pursue theologybeyond the limits of your present state of development: it is wrong for us who are still drinking the milk of thevirtues to attempt to soar to the heights of theology, and if we do so we will flounder like fledglings, howevergreat the longing roused within us by the honey of spiritual knowledge. But, once purified by self-restraint andtears, we will be lifted up from the earth like Elijah or Habakkuk (cf. 2 Kgs. 2:11; Bel and Dr., verses 36-39),anticipating the moment when we will be caught up into the clouds (cf. 1 Thess. 4:17); and transported beyondthe world of the senses by undistracted prayer, pure and contemplative, we may then in our search for Godtouch the fringe of theology.

7. If you wish to be granted a mental vision of the divine you must first embrace a peaceful and quiet way of life,and devote your efforts to acquiring a knowledge of both yourself and God. If you do this and achieve a purestate untroubled by any passion, there, is nothing to prevent your intellect from perceiving, as it were m a lightbreeze (cf. 1 Kgs. 19:12 LXX), Him who is invisible to all: and He will bring you good tidings of salvationthrough a yet clearer knowledge of Himself.

8. Just as lightning presages thunder, so divine forgiveness is

followed by the calming of the passions. This in its turn is accompanied by a foretaste of the blessedness held instore for us. There is no divine mercy or hope of dispassion for the soul that loves this world more than its Creator,and is attached to visible things and clings wholly to the pleasures and enjoyments of

the flesh.

9. Do not attempt to discover with the intellect what or where God is: since He transcends everything He isbeyond being and independent of place. But contemplate - so far as this is possible -only God the Logos.Though circumscribed. He is radiant with the divine nature; though descried m a particular place. He is yetpresent everywhere because of the infinite nature of His Godhead. The greater your purification, the more youwill be granted His illumination.

10. If you ardently long for true knowledge and unequivocal assurance of salvation, first study how to break thesoul's impassioned links with the body; then, stripped of all attachment to material things, descend to the depthsof humility, and there you will find the precious pearl of your salvation hidden in the shell of divme knowledge.This will be your pledge of the radiance of God's kingdom.

11. He who has achieved inward self-renunciation and has subjected his flesh to the spirit no longer needs to submithimself to other men. Such a person obeys God's word and law like a grateful servant. But we who are still

engaged in the war between body and soul must be subject to someone else: we must have a commander andhelmsman who will skillfully arm and guide us, lest we should be destroyed by our spiritual enemies orsubmerged beneath our passions because of our inexperience,

12. If you are untroubled by any passion; if your heart yearns more and more for God; if you do not fear death butregard it as a dream and even long for your release - then you have attained the pledge of your salvation and,rejoicing with inexpressible joy, you cany the kingdom of heaven within you.

13. If you have been found worthy of divine and venerable priesthood, you have committed yourself sacrificially todie to the passions and to sensual pleasure. Only then dare you approach the awesome, living sacrifice;otherwise you will be consumed by the divine fire like dry tinder. If the seraphim did not dare to touch thedivine coal without tongs (cf. Isa. 6:6), how can you do so unless you have attained dispassion? You mustthrough dispassion have a

consecrated tongue, purified lips, and a chaste soul and body; and your very hands, as ministers of the fiery,supraessential sacrifice, must be more burnished than any gold.

14. To grasp the full import of my words, remember that you look daily on the salvation of God which, when hesaw it but once, so terrified and amazed Symeon the Elder that he prayed for his deliverance (cf. Luke 2:29). Ifyou have not been assured by the Holy Spirit that you are equal to the angels and so an acceptable intermediarybetween God and man, do not presumptuously dare to celebrate the awesome and most holy mysteries, whicheven angels venerate and from whose purity many of the saints themselves have in reverent fear drawn back.Otherwise, like Zan, you will be destroyed because of your pretence to holiness.

15. 'Watch yourself attentively", it is said (cf. Exod. 23:21. LXX). Always offer the sacrifice first of all on behalf ofyour own sins: then if, because of your weakness, some defilement exists m you already or now enters into you,it will be consumed by the divine fire. In this way, as a chosen vessel, serviceable, pure and worthy of such asacrifice, you will have power to change wooden or clay vessels into silver or gold, provided that you haveintimate communion with God and He hears your prayers. For where God hears and responds there is nothing tohinder a change from one thing to another.

16. Ponder deeply on the angelic honor of which you have been found worthy and, whatever the rank to which youhave been called, strive through virtue and purity to keep yourself unsullied. For you know from what heightLucifer fell on account of his pride. Do not dream up great ideas about yourself and suffer the same fate. Regardyourself as dust and ashes (cf Gen. 18:27), or as refuse, or as some cur-like creature; and lament continuously,for it is only on account of God's inexpressible compassion and kindness that you are permitted to handle theholy things at the celebration of the dread mysteries, and so are called to communion and kinship with Him.

17. A priest should be pure from all passions, especially un-chastity and rancor, and should keep his imagination

passion-free. Otherwise he will be rejected with loathing, as if he were some foul

leper who touches the body ofa king.

18. When your tears have washed you whiter than snow and your conscience is spotless in its purits', and when theangel-like white-

ness of your outer garments reveals your soul's inner beauty - then, and only then, you may in holiness touch holythings. Make sure that you do not rely only on human traditions-in celebrating the divine mysteries, but let God'sgrace mwardly and invisibly fill you with the knowledge of higher things.

19. If you aspire to incorruptibility and immortality, pursue with faith and reverence whatever is life-giving anddoes not perish: long to depart from this world as one made perfect through faith. If you still fear death, youhave not yet been intermingled with Christ through love, although, you have been found worthy to sacrificeHim with your own hands and have been filled with His flesh. For, were you linked to Him m love, you wouldmake haste to join Him, no longer concerned about this life or the flesh.

20. You who sacrifice God's flesh and share in it through holy communion should also be united to Him by dyingthe death that He died (cf Rom. 6:5). As St Paul says (cf Gal. 2:20), you should live, not for yourself, but forHim who was crucified and died on your behalf. If, dominated by passion, you live for the flesh and the world,prepare yourself for deathless punishment through death unless you resign of your own accord from yourpriesthood before you die. But many unworthy priests have been snatched away by sudden death and sent to thehalls of judgment.

21. There was once a monk-priest who had a reputation for piety and was held in honor by many on account of hisoutward behavior, though within he was licentious and defiled. One day he was celebrating the Divine Liturgyand, on reaching the cherubic hymn, he had bent his head as usual before the holy table and was reading theprayer, 'No one is worthy...', when he suddenly died, his. soul having left him in that position.

22. Nothing is more important than true intelligence and spiritual knowledge, for they produce both fear of God andlonging for Him. Fear of God purifies us

through awe and self-abasement. Longing for Him brings us: toperfection through discrimination and inward illumination, raising our intellect to: the heights of contemplation.Without, fear we cannot not acquire intense love for the divine, and so cannot spread our wings and find ourresting-place in the realm of our aspiration.

23. Be persuaded by me, you who ardently and in all seriousness long for salvations make haste, search persistently,ask ceaselessly.

knock patiently, and continue until you reach your goal. Establish a basis of firm faith and humility. You will haveachieved what you want not simply when your sins are forgiven but when, fearlessly and joyously separated fromthe flesh, you are no longer excited or scared by the eruption of any passion.

24. Ask with many tears to be given the full assurance of salvation, but - if you are humble - do not ask to be givenit long before your death, in case you grow negligent and indifferent. Ask that you may obtain it when you areclose to your departure - but make your request in all seriousness, lest out of presumption you should deludeyourself into believing that you possess such assurance only to End, when the time comes, that you have failedto attain it. Where will you go then, unhappy man, deprived of the foretaste and unquestionable assurance ofsalvation given by the Spirit?

25. If you aspire to the dispassion that deifies, find it first of all through obedience and humility, lest by travelingalong some other path you end up in trouble. The person who has attained dispassion is not sometimes disturbedby the passions and at other times calm and at rest, but enjoys dispassion continually and, even when thepassions are still present within him, he remains unaffected by the things that provoke them. Above all he is notaffected by the images which the passions generate.

26. When the soul lea\'es the body, the enemy advances to attack it, fiercely reviling it and accusing it of its sins ina harsh and terrifying manner. The devout soul, however, even though in the past it has often been wounded bysin, is not frightened by thte enemy's attacks and threats. Strengthened by the Lord, winged by joy, filled withcourage by the holy angels that guide it, and encircled and

protected by the light of faith, it answers the enemywith great boldness: 'Fugitive from heaven, wicked slave, what have I to do with you? You have no authorityover me: Christ the Son of God has authority over me and over all things. Against Him have I sinned, beforeHim shall I stand on trial, having His Precious Cross as a sure pledge of His saving love towards me. Flee fromme, destroyer! You have nothing to do with the servants of Christ.' When the soul says all this fearlessly, thedevil turns his back, howling aloud and unable to with stand the name of Christ. Then the soul swoops down onthe devil from above, attacking him like a hawk attacking a crow. After this it is brought rejoicing by the holy

angels to the place appointed for it in accordance with its inward state.

27. The longing for transient things will not drag you earth-wards if you keep your mind on the things of heaven;but when you are shackled by an attachment to earthly things you are like an eagle caught in a trap by its claw

and prevented from flying. Regard all you possess as trash, in the hope of better things. Shake off even yourbody when the time comes, and follow the angel of God that takes you from it.

28. Just as a coin that does not bear the image of the king cannot be placed in the royal treasuries with the othercurrency, so without true spiritual knowledge and dispassion you cannot receive a foretaste of divineblessedness and depart with courage and confidence from this world to take your place among the elect m thenext. By spiritual knowledge, I do not mean wisdom, but that unerring apperception of God and of divinerealities through which the devout, no longer dragged down by the passions, are raised to a divine state by thegrace of the Spirit.

29. Even though you have successfully practiced all the virtues, do not assume that you have attained dispassionand can dwell in the world without anxiety; for your soul may still bear within it the imprint of the passions, andso you will have difficulties when you die. But, guided always by fear, keep careful watch over your mutableand ever-changing nature and shun the causes of passion. For changeless dispassion in its highest form is foundonly in those who have attained

perfect love, have been lifted above sensory things through unceasingcontemplation, and have transcended the body through humility. The flame of the passions no longer touchesthem: it has been cut off by the voice of the Lord (cf. Ps. 29:7), since the nature of such people has already beentransmuted into incorruptibility.

30. Do not try to attain dispassion prematurely and you will not suffer what Adam suffered when he ate too soonfrom the tree of spiritual knowledge (cf. Gen. 3:6). But patiently labor on, with constant entreaty and self-control in all things; and if by means of self-reproach and the utmost humility you keep the ground you havewon, you will then in good time receive the grace of dispassion. The

harbor of rest is reached only after many storms and struggles; and God is not being unjust to those walking on thetrue path if He keeps the gate of dispassion closed until the right moment comes.

31. Slothful and inexperienced as you are, you too should "go to the ant" (Prov. 6:6): imitate its simplicity andinsignificance, and know that God, self-sufficient and superabundant, has no need of our virtues. On thecontrary. He richly bestows His gifts on us and through His grace saves those who are consciously grateful,though in His compassion He also accepts whatever work we are able to do. If, then, you labor as one in debt toGod for blessings already received, you do well and God's mercy is close to you. But if you think that God is inyour debt because of the good things you imagine you have done, you are quite deluded. For how can thebestower of gifts be the debtor? Work like a hired servant and, advancing step by step, you will by God's mercyattain what you seek.

32. Shall I show you another path to salvation - or, rather, to dispassion? Through your entreaties constrain .theCreator not to let you fail in your purpose. Constantly bring before Him as intercessors all the angelic powers,all the saints, and especially the most pure Mother of God. Do not ask for dispassion, for you are unworthy of

such a gift: but ask persistently for salvation and with it you will receive dispassion as well. The one is likesilver, the other like pure gold. In particular,

let inward meditation on God be your handmaid, and turn yourwhole attention to the secret mysteries concerning Him: for the principles of these mysteries will deify you, andGod delights in them and is won over by them.

33. Strive to receive a sure, unequivocal pledge of salvation in your heart, so that at the time of your death you willnot be distraught and unexpectedly terrified. You have received such a pledge when your heart no longerreproaches you for your failings and your conscience stops chiding you because of your fits of anger: whenthrough God's grace your bestial passions have been tamed: when you weep tears of solace and your intellectprays undistracted and with purity: and when you await death, which most people dread and run away from,calmly and with a ready heart.

34. The words of eternal life which, according to the chief of the apostles (cf John 6:68), God the Logos possesses,are the inner essences of all the things created by Him. Thus the person who, because of his purity, has beeninitiated into the mystery of these

inner essences has already acquired eternal life, a pledge of the Spirit and confident expectation of salvation. Hewho values the flesh more than the soul and is attached to Worldly things is not worthy of such gifts.

35. An intelligent person is not merely someone who has the power of speech, for this is common to all men. Onthe contrary, he is someone who seeks for God with his intelligence. But he will never find the 'essence of Himwho transcends all being, for this is beyond the scope of all created nature. But in much the same way as abuilder is to be seen in his work, so the sovereign artificer is to be found and as it were perceived in the creativewisdom inherent in living things, and in His providential care, governance, unification, guidance andconservation of them.

36. You cannot achieve a condition of total poverty without dis-passion, or dispassion without love, or love withoutthe fear of God and pure prayer, or fear of God and pure prayer without faith and detachment: for it is whenwinged by faith and detachment that the intellect discards all base concern and soars upwards in search of itsLord.

37. Let chastity be as dear to you as the pupil of your eye, and then you will become a temple of God and Hischerished dwelling place. For without self-restraint you cannot live with God. Chastity and self-restraint arebom of a longing for God combined with detachment and renunciation of the world: and they are conserved byhumility, self-control, unbroken prayer, spiritual contemplation, freedom from anger and intense weeping.Without dispassion, however, you cannot achieve the beauty of discrimination.

38. Let no one deceive you, brother: without holiness, as the apostle says, no one can see God (cf. Heb. 12:14). Forthe Lord, who is more than holy and beyond all purity, will not appear to an impure person. Just as he who

loves father or mother, daughter or son (of. Matt. 10:37) more than the Lord is unworthy of Him, so is he wholoves anything transient and material. Even more unworthy is the person who chooses foul and fetid sin topreference to love for the Lord: for God rejects whoever does not repudiate all filthmess: 'Corruption does notmherit mcorruption' (1 Cor. 15:50).

39. You will not be worthy of divine love unless you possess spiritual knowledge, or of spiritual knowledge unlessyou possess faith. I do not mean faith of a theoretical kind, but that which we

acquire as a result of practicing the virtues. You will achieve true compunction only when through self-control andvigil, prayer and humility, you have withered the propensity to sensual pleasure congenital to the flesh and havebeen crucified with Christ (cf Gal. 2:19-20), no longer living the life of the passions but living and walking in theSpirit, filled with the hope of heavenly glory.

40. Cry out to God, " "I know that Thou favourest me, because my enemy does not exult over me" (Ps. 41:11): hewill not domineer over me and plague me to the very end through the passions. But Thou wilt snatch me fromhis hands before I die and, granting me life in the Spirit according to Thy will, through a holy death Thou wiltbring me, saved, before Thy judgment seat. There, through Thy mercy, I shall receive the pledge of salvationand the assurance that is beyond all doubting. Thus I shall not be troubled and unprepared at the time of mydeparture from the world, nor shall I find the ordeal unbearable, more harsh

and baleful than a death sentence ortorture."

41. Faith and hope are not merely casual or theoretical matters. Faith requires a steadfast soul, while hope needs afirm will and an honest heart. How without grace can one readily believe in things unseen? How can a manhave hope concerning the hidden things held in store unless through his own integrity he has gained someexperience of the Lord's gifts? These gifts of grace are a gage of the blessings held in store, which theymanifest as present realities. Faith and hope, then, require both virtue on our part and God's inspiration andhelp. Unless both are present we labor in vain.

42. The offspring of true virtue is either spiritual knowledge or dispassion or both together. If we fail to acquirethem then we labor in vain, and our apparent virtue is not genuine; for if it were it would have produced fruit aswell as leaves. In reality, however, it does not enjoy. God's blessing but is false, a matter of self-satisfaction, orelse something feigned in order to gain the esteem of others or from some other motive not in accordance withGod's will. But if we correct our motive, we shall undoubtedly receive the grace of God that bestows bothspiritual knowledge and dispassion at the time and in the measure appropriate.

43. Discern the wiles of the enemy with the light of grace and, throwing yourself before God with tears, confessyour weakness.

counting yourself nothing, even though the deceiver tries to persuade you to think otherwise. Do not even ask forspiritual gifts unless they contribute to your salvation and help you to remain humble. Seek the knowledge that doesnot make you conceited, but leads you to the knowledge of God. Pray to be released from the tyranny of the passionsbefore you die, and to depart this life in a state of dispassion or - more humbly - of compassion for the sins of others.

44. Just as it is impossible to fly without wings, so we cannot attain the blessings for which we hope withoutalready in this life receiving an assurance that is beyond doubt. Because of their extreme humility, or throughthe grace of the Holy Spirit, such assurance is given to those who have been reconciled with God, and whopossess a dispassion that is less or more perfect in proportion to the degree of their reconciliation andpurification. Those who depart from the

body before receiving this assurance die while still in the winter of thepassions, or else on the Sabbath (cf. Matt. 24:20) - refraining, that is to say, from the work of the virtues - andthey are subject to trial and judgment, being culpable at the time of retribution.

45. Since salvation comes to you as a free gift, give thanks to God your savior. If you wish to present Him withgifts, gratefully offer from your widowed soul two tiny coins, humility and love, and God will accept these inthe treasury of His salvation more gladly than the host of virtues deposited there by others (cf. Mark 12:41-43).Dead through the passions, pray like Lazarus to be brought to life again, sending to God these two sisters tointercede with Him (cf. John 11:20-44): and you will surely attain your goal.

46. The practice of the virtues does not by itself bring you to the dispassion that enables you to pray undistractedand in purity: spiritual contemplation must also in its turn confer on your intellect illuminative knowledge andthe understanding of created beings. Thus winged and enlightened, the intellect is totally rapt by the love of trueprayer and raised up to the cognate light of the incorporeal orders; thence, in so far as this is possible, it is bornetowards the ultimate light, the triple sun of the Trinity supremely divine.

47. We will not be punished or condemned in the age to be because we have sinned, since we were given a mutableand unstable nature. But we will be punished if, after sinning, we did not repent

and turn from our evil ways to the Lord; for we have been given the power to repent, as well as the time in which todo so. Only through repentance shall we receive God's mercy, and not its opposite. His passionate anger. Not thatGod is angry with us; He is angry with evil. Indeed, the divine is beyond passion and vengefulness, though we speakof it as reflecting, like a mirror, our actions and dispositions, giving to each of us whatever we deserve.

48. When you fall from a higher state, do not become panic-stricken, but through remorse, grief, rigorous self-reproach and, above all, through copious tears shed in a contrite spirit, correct yourself and return quickly toyour former condition. Rising up again after your fall, you will enter the joyous valley of salvation,

taking careso far as is possible not to anger your Judge again, so as not to need atoning tears and sorrow in the future. Butif you show no such repentance in this present life, you will certainly be punished in the age to be.

49. Let us return to the subject of the priesthood. As an. angelic order it requires of us an angelic purification, and adegree of discretion and self-restraint greater than in our previous life. What is defiled can m some measurebecome pure; it is far worse for the pure to become defiled. If we mix darkness with light, foul odors withsweet, we shall inherit calamity and destruction because of our sacrilege, like Ananias and Sapphira (cf Acts5:1-10).

50. If, lost and useless though you are, you decide after superficial purification to enter the heavenly, angelic orderof the priesthood and to become a chosen vessel, suitable for the Lord's use, as St Paul says (cf. 2 Tim. 2:21;Acts 9:15), then you should keep unsullied the office of which you have been found worthy, guarding the divinegift as you would the pupil of your eye. Otherwise, fulfilling your role in a perfunctory manner, you will be castdown from the heights into the abyss and find it hard to climb out again.

51. Wisely bear in mind that, if God acquits, no one can condemn (cf. Rom. 8:33-34). If you have been called toenter into the supramundane grace of the priesthood, do not worry about your past life, even if to some- extent ithas been soiled: for it has been purified once more by God and through your own self-correction. Butafterwards be diligent and watchful, so as not to eclipse the grace. Then if someone stupidly casts aspersions onyour priesthood be

cause of your past, he will hear a voice from heaven saying, 'What God has cleansed, do not call unclean' (Acts10:15).

52. The office of the priesthood is light and its yoke easy (cf Matt. 11:30) so long as it is discharged as it should be,and so long as the grace of the Holy Spirit is not put up for sale. When what is beyond price is bartered in thename of human expedience and for perishable gifts, and when the call is not from above, the burden is heavyindeed; for it is borne by someone unworthy, whose powers it exceeds. The yoke is then extremely harsh,chafing the neck of him who carries it and sapping his strength; and unless it is taken from him, it will exhaustand

destroy him utterly.

53. When you boldly take up the yoke of the priesthood, you should mend your ways and expound the truth rightly,thus working out your salvation with fear and trembling; "for our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:29). If youare as gold and silver and you touch this fire, have no fear of being burnt, just as the three children in Babylonhad no fear (cf. Dan. 3:17). But if you are like grass or reeds or some other easily combustible material as aresult of your earthly thoughts, then tremble lest you should be reduced to ashes in the heavenly fire - unless

like Lot (cf. Gen. 19:17, 29) you escape God's wrath by quitting the priesthood. Yet it may be that some of thelighter faults that result from weaknesses are consumed by this divine fire during the celebration of the Liturgy,while you yourself remain unbumed and unharmed in the fire, like the fragile bush in the desert (cf Exod. 3:2).

54. If like someone with, gonorrhea you lack the strength to break with your impassioned state because it hasbecome chronic, how can you dare, wretched as you are, to touch what even to angels is untouchable? Ethershudder with awe and renounce the sacred ministry, in this way propitiating God; or else, obdurate andincorrigible, expect to fall into the hands of the living God and to experience His wrath. God will not spare youout of compassion, but will punish you mercilessly for daring to come to the royal wedding feast with both souland garment denied, unworthy even of entry, much less of joining in the celebration (cf. Matt. 22 : 12).

55. I myself have known a priest who dared to celebrate the divine mysteries unworthily, having succumbed to thepassion of unchastity. First he fell victim to a dreadful, incurable disease and was near death. Then, afterunavailingly doing everything he could

to rid himself of this disease - in fact it got even worse - he began to realize that he was dying because he hadcelebrated the mysteries unworthily. Straight away he took a vow to desist from celebrating, and recovered at once,so that not even a trace of his illness remained.

56. The priestly dignity, like the priestly vestments, is full of splendor, but only so long as it is illumined fromwithin by purity of soul. Once it has been disgraced through lack of attentiveness, and no notice is taken of theprotests of the conscience, then the light becomes darkness, the harbinger of eternal darkness and eternal fire.Our only recourse to such a case is to leave this precipitous path, and to take the road that leads safely, by wayof virtue and humility, to the kingdom of God.

57. Salvation is attained through simplicity and virtue, not through the glories of the priesthood, which demands ofus an angelic way of life. Either, then, you should become dispassionate like the angels, in thought and purposesuperior to the world and the flesh, climbing the ladder to heaven m this way; or else, aware of your weakness,you should in fear avoid the high rank of the priestliood, terrified of the great fall should you prove unworthy ofit. Choose the form of life followed by the laity, for it brings one no less close to God than priesthood.Moreover, should you fall while pursuing it, through God's mercy and grace you will easily rise again byrepenting.

58. 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God' (1 Cor. 15:50). How is it, then, that you who partake ofGod's flesh and blood, do not become one body with Him and commingle with Him through His blood?Although the kingdom of heaven is within you, are you still besieged by the passions of your own flesh andblood? I fear that the Spirit of God will not remain within you in your non-Spiritual state, and that on the day ofjudgment you will be sentenced with the utmost severity: the priesthood will be taken from you because of yourunworthiness of such grace, and you will be sent to eternal punishment.

59. If there is no fear of God before your eyes, you will think it a trivial matter to officiate unworthily, for you willbe deceived by your own self-love into imagining that God will be charitable to you. Long ago Dathan andAbiram imagined the same thing until the earth opened beneath them and swallowed them up (cf Num. 16:25-33). Standing with genuine awe and fear before Him who is

to be feared, recognize how grave a matter it is to officiate, and either engage in

the priestliood worthily and purely -as it were like an angel - or wisely keep away from the dread ministry. Otherwise, slighting your office, and usingspecious arguments against your conscience when it rebukes you, you will say in your agony as you are condemnedon the day that all things are judged and set aright: 'The fear that I feared has come upon me, and what I dreaded hasvisited me" (Job 3:25).

60. Watchfully and sedulously you should offer, with contrition and tears, the world-saving and holy sacrifice firstof all in propitiation for your own sins. Who after your death will offer it on your behalf with such concern?Anticipate wisely, therefore: bury yourself and commemorate yourself in advance. Offer the holy gifts to Godon the holy table as the means of your salvation, making present the voluntary death He suffered in His love forman.

61. Inexpressible is the soul's delight when in full assurance of salvation it leaves the body, stripping it off asthough it were a garment. Because it is now attaining what it hopes for, it puts off the body painlessly, going inpeace to meet the radiant and joyful angel that comes down for it, and traveling with him unimpeded throughthe air, totally unharmed by the evil spirits. Rising with joy, courage and thanksgiving, it comes in adorationbefore the Creator, and is allotted its place among those akin to it and equal to it in virtue, until the universalresurrection.

62. I shall tell you something strange, but do not be surprised by it. Should you fail to attain dispassion because ofthe predispositions dominating you, but at the time of your death be in the depths of humility, you will beexalted above the clouds no less than the man who is dispassionate. For even if the treasure of those who aredispassionate consists of every virtue, the precious stone of humility is more valuable than them all: it bringsabout not only propitiation with the Creator, but also entry with the elect into the bridal chamber of Hiskingdom.

63. Having received from God a propitiation for your offences, glorify Him who is long-suffering and forgiving,and make every effort to avoid deliberate sin. For though your sins may be forgiven daily until your death, itwould be foolish of you to sin glibly with full knowledge of what you are doing. None the less, if you drive offthe dog of despair with the stone of hopefulness and supplicate

boldly and insistently, your many sins will be forgiven you. Then, in the age to be, as a debtor you too will love theGod who is beyond all goodness and yet has compassion for you.

64. When, energized by divine grace, you find yourself full of tears in prayer before God, lie on the groundstretched out in the form of a, cross, beat the earth with your brow and ask for deliverance from this life as arelease from corruption and a liberation from trials and temptations. But ask that this may be granted, not as youwish, but as and when God wills. For your part, you should long for your departure now, hoping that, if youcome before God with, tears and in the depths of humility, you will stand firm and confident in the fire of yourdesire and your prayer; but you should also be ready for your death to be delayed for the time being, should Godforesee something better for you. Pursue your goal forcefully, dedicating your whole life to God, in all youractions, words and intentions seeking by all possible means not to fall away from Him.

65. While still in the flesh, do not try to plumb the inner depths of intelligible realities even if the noetic power ofyour soul is drawn towards them by its purity. For unless the bodiless part of man, now mingled with breath andblood, is released from the grossness of materiality and enters the realm of the intelligible realities, it cannotgrasp these realities properly. You should therefore prepare yourself to issue from this material world as thoughfrom some dark second maternal womb, and to enter that immaterial and radiant realm, joyfully glorifying ourBenefactor who carries us through death towards the fulfillment of our hopes. Be watchful at all times becauseof the ungodly demons that surround us, always plotting to disgrace jus and craftily watching for our heel (cf.Gen. 3:15), that is, for the end of our life, in order to trip us up. Until your death, therefore, go in fear andtrembling because of the uncertainty of what is to come; for, endowed as you are with free will, you have beencreated with a .mutable and fluctuating nature.

66. The enemy attacks us with fierce and terrible temptations when he perceives that our soul aspires to scale greatheights of virtue. This we learn from the words of the Lord's Prayer and from our own attempts to ascendbeyond the material duality of our flesh and sensory things. The hater of mankind tries us with such malice thatwe despair even of life. Of course, in his futility, he does not

realize that he confers many blessings on us, testing our endurance and weaving for us more splendid garlands.

67. No struggle is greater than the struggle for self-restraint and virginity. He who honors celibacy is admired even;by the angels and is crowned just as athletes are. If, bound to flesh and blood, he strives to imitate throughchastity the immaterial nature of the angels, terrible Is the battle he has to fight; and if he is successful, so great

is his achievement that it appears virtually impossible and beyond our nature. Indeed, it would be impossible ifGod did not help us from above, supporting the weakness of our nature, mending what is rotten, and somehowraising us from the ground through divine love and through hope for the gifts held in store for us.

68. Flesh flabby from over-drinking and over-sleeping is a great obstacle to self-restraint. True self-restraint isunaffected even by the fantasies that arise during sleep. If the intellect pursues these fantasies, this indicates thatit still bears deep within itself the sickness of the passions. But if through grace it is found worthy to communewith God outside the body during sleep, it remains unaffected by these fantasies and serves as a vigilantguardian of soul and body, both of which are at peace. The intellect is then like a sheep-dog that keeps watchagainst the cunning wolves, not letting them ravage the flock.

69. Once more, I shall tell you something strange at which you are not to be startled. A mystery is accomplishedsecretly between the soul and God in the higher reaches of perfect purity, love and faith. When a man iscompletely reconciled to God he is united with Him through unceasing prayer and contemplation. Such wasElijah's state when he closed the heavens, causing a drought (cf. 1 Kgs. 17:1), and burnt the sacrifice with firefrom heaven (cf. 1 Kgs. 18:36-38). In such a state Moses divided the sea (cf. Exod. 14:21) and defeated Amalekby stretching out his arms (cf. Exod. 17:11-13). In such a state Jonah was saved from the whale and from thedeep (cf. Jonah 2:1-10). For the person found worthy of this mystery compels our most compassionate God todo whatever he wants. Even when still in the flesh, he has passed beyond the limits of corruption and mortality,and he aw aits death as if it were an everyday sleep

that pleasurably brings him to the fulfillment of his hopes.

70. Be full of reverence for our Lord's sufferings, for the

self-emptying of the divine Logos for our sake and, above all, for the sacrifice of the divine, life-creating body andblood and their interfusion with us. For we have been found worthy not only to participate in them but also toofficiate at the sacrifice. Humble yourself like a sheep for the slaughter, truly regarding all men as your superiors,and strive not to wound Ac conscience of any man, especially without reason. Do not dare to touch the holy gifts un-purified, lest you should be burnt like grass by the divine fire and destroyed like melting wax.

71. If you celebrate the divine, revered and awesome mysteries in the proper manner, with absolutely nothing onyour conscience, you may hope for salvation, for the benefit you derive from this will be greater than that whichderives from any work or from contemplation. But if you cannot celebrate as you should, you will yourselfrealize that it is better to acknowledge your weakness and to withdraw from the priesthood than to fulfill yourpriestly ministry imperfectly and impurely, appearing exalted in the eyes of many but being in reality a corpseto be wept over because of your unworthiness.

72. As the sun excels the stars so do the worship, propitiation and invocation of the priest excel all psalmody andprayer. For we priests sacrifice, set forth and offer in intercession the Only-Begotten Himself who in His freely-given compassion was slain on behalf of sinners. And, provided that our consciences are not polluted, we

receive thereby not only remission of sins, but all the things for which we pray and which are for our benefit.What is united to the Divinity bums the brushwood of sin like coal and illumines the hearts of those whoapproach in faith. Similarly, the divine and precious blood cleanses and purifies more than any hyssop everystain and defilement m those who dare to receive it with all the purity and holiness of which they are capable.

73. As one of the saints has said, it is not the ascended body of God the Logos that comes down from heaven and issacrificed; it is the bread and wine

themselves that are changed into the body and blood of Christ through therites celebrated with faith, fear, longing and reverence by those found worthy of the holy priesthood. And thisinterchange takes place through the action and presence of the

Holy Spirit. The bread and wine do not become a body other than that of our Lord, but are changed into His body,being then a source of immortality and no longer perishable. What therefore must be the purity and holmess requiredof the priest who touches the divine body? And what boldness must he not have as mediator between God and man,havmg as co-intercessors the most holy Mother of God, all the heavenly, angelic powers, and the saints from everyage? Since he has an angelic, or even archangelic, office, in my view he needs to be like the angels and archangels.

74. You should note, Pisinios, that the holy gifts awaiting consecration lie on the altar after the Creed uncoveredbecause there has to be a kind of voiceless supplication to God on behalf of those offering them. Seeing themuncovered. He does not overlook or despise this supplication; for He keeps in mind His voluntary self-emptyingfor us sinners. His ineffable self-abasement and His compassionate death. He did not ransom and save usthrough His passion because we deserved it but, blessed and forbearing as He is. He had mercy on us andrestored us in spite of our offences.

75. Even though, through the practice of pure prayer that immaterially unites the immaterial intellect with God, youreceive the pledge of the Spirit and see as in a mirror the blessedness that aw aits you after this present life, andeven though you fully and consciously experience the kingdom of heaven within you, do not allow yourself tobe released from the flesh without foreknowledge of your death. Pray persistently for this knowledge and be ingood hope of receiving it when you are close to death, if this is for your profit. Prepare yourself constantly fordeath, casting aside all fear, so that, traversing the air and escaping the evil spirits, you may boldly enter thevaults of heaven. Ranked with the angelic orders and numbered among all the righteous and elect, you will thenbehold the Divinity, in so far as this is possible. You will perceive, that is to say, the blessings that come fromHim, as well as the Logos of God shedding His light

through the regions above the heavens, adored in Hisunsullied flesh, together with the Father and the Spirit, in a single act of worship by all the host of heaven andall the saints. Amen.

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St Philotheos of Sinai

(?9th-10th century)(Volume 3, pp. 15-31)

Introductory Note

'It is not clear', states St Nikodimos, 'at what date our holy father Philotheos flourished and died.' He is known tous solely as the author of the present work Forty Texts on Watchfulness. From his name it is evident that he was amonk of Mount Sinai, while the content of his Forty Texts shows that he followed in the tradition of St JohnKlimakos, abbot of Sinai (sixth-seventh century), whom he quotes (§20; cf §34). His spiritual teaching is also closeto that of another Sinaite author, St Hesychios the Priest (?eighth-ninth century);' the three of them may beregarded as forming together a distinctively Sinaite 'school' of ascetic theology. Certainly later in date, then, thanKlimakos, and probably likewise later than Hesychios, Philotheos may have lived in the ninth or tenth century.

Clear and concise, the Forty Texts are especially valuable for the simple definitions that they give of keyconcepts. As the title indicates, St Philotheos assigns central significance to the quality of watchfulness or spiritualsobriety (nipsis). In common with St Hesychios, he sees this as closely connected with inner attentiveness and theguarding of the intellect: the three notions are virtually synonymous. But he underlines, more explicitly than doesHesychios, the importance of bodily asceticism and the keeping of the commandments; the inner and the outerwarfare go together. Like the other two members of the Sinaite 'school', he commends the invocation of the HolyName, 'the unceasing prayer of Jesus Christ' (§2), which has power to 'concentrate the scattered intellect' (§27),thereby enabling it to maintain continual mindfulness of God.

Particularly striking is Philotheos' insistence upon theremembrance of death, which is to be viewed not as something morbid and 'world- denying', but rather asenhancing the unique value of each moment of time.

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Forty Texts on Watchfulness

1. There is within us, on the noetic plane, a warfare tougher than that on the plane of the senses. The Spiritualworker has to press on with his intellect towards the goal (cf. Phil. 3:14), in order to enshrine perfectly theremembrance of God in his heart like some pearl or precious stone (cf. Matt. 13:44-46). He has to give upeverything, including the body, and to disdain this present life, if he wishes to possess God alone in his heart. For thenoetic vision of God, the divine Chrysostom has said, can by itself destroy the demonic spirits.

2. When engaged in noetic warfare we should therefore do all we can to choose some spiritual practice fromdivine Scripture and apply it to our intellect like a healing ointment. From dawn we should stand bravely andunflinchingly at the gate of the heart, with true remembrance of God and unceasing prayer of Jesus Christ in the

soul; and, keeping watch with the inteUect, we should slaughter all the sinners of the land (of. Ps. 101:8. LXX).Given over in the intensity of our ecstasy to the constant remembrance of God, we should for the Lord's sake cut offthe heads of the tyrants (cf. Hab. 3:14. LXX), that is to say, should destroy hostile thoughts at their first appearance.For in noetic warfare, too, there is a certain divine practice and order. Thus we should force ourselves to act in thisway until it is time for eating. After this, having thanked the Lord who solely by virtue of His compassion providesus with both spiritual and bodily food, we should devote ourselves to the remembrance of death and to meditation;on it. The following morning we should courageously resume the same sequence of tasks. Even if we act daily inthis manner we will only just manage, with the Lord's help, to escape from the meshes of the noetic enemy. Whenthis pattern of spiritual practice is

firmly

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established in us, it gives birth to the triad faith, hope and love. Faith disposes us truly to fear God. Hope,transcending servile fear, binds us to the love of God, since 'hope does not disappoint' (Rom. 5:5), containing as itdoes the seed of that twofold love on which hang 'the law and the prophets' (Matt. 22:40). And 'love never fails' (1Cor. 13:8), once it has become to him who shares in it the motive for fulfilling the divine law both in the present lifeand in the life to be.

3. It is veiy rare to find people whose intelligence is in a state of stillness. Indeed, such a state is only to befound in those who through their whole manner of life strive to attract divine grace and blessing to themselves. If,then, we seek - by guarding our intellect and by inner watchfulness - to engage in the noetic work that is the truephilosophy in Christ, we must begin by exercising self-control with regard to our food, eating and drinking as littleas possible. Watchfulness may fittingly be called a path leading both to the kingdom within us and to that which isto be; while noetic work, which trains and purifies the intellect and changes it from an impassioned state to a state ofdispassion, is like a window full of light through which God looks, revealing Himself to the intellect.

4. Where humility is combined with the remembrance of God that is established through watchfulness andattention, and also with recurrent prayer inflexible in its resistance to the enemy, there is the place of God, theheaven of the heart in which because of God's presence no demonic army dares to make a stand.

5. Nothing is more unsettling than talkativeness and more pernicious than an unbridled tongue, disruptive as itis of the soul's proper state. For the soul's chatter destroys what we build each day and scatters what we havelaboriously gathered together. What is more disastrous than this 'uncontrollable evil' (Jas. 3:8)? The tongue has to berestrained, checked by force and muzzled, so to speak, and made to serve only what is needful. Who can describe allthe damage that the tongue does to the soul?

6. The first gate of entry to the noetic Jerusalem - that is, to attentiveness of the intellect - is the deliberatesilencing of your tongue, even though the intellect

itself may not yet be still. The second gate is balanced self-control in food and drink. The third, is ceaseless mindfulness of death, for this purifies intellect and body. Havingonce experienced the beauty of this mindfulness of death, I

was so wounded and delighted by it - in Spirit, not through the eye - that 1 wanted to make it my life's companion,for 1 was enraptured by its loveliness and majesty, its humility and contrite joy, by how full of reflection it is, howapprehensive of the judgment to come, and how aware of life's anxieties. It makes life-giving, healing tears flowfrom our bodily eyes, while from our noetic eyes rises a fount of wisdom that delights the mmd. This daughter ofAdam - this mindfulness of death -1 always longed, as 1 said, to have as my, companion, to sleep with, to talk with,and to enquire from her what will happen after the body has been discarded. But unclean forgetfulness, the devil'smurky daughter, has frequently prevented this.

7. It is by means of thoughts that the spirits of evil wage a secret war against the soul. For since the soul isinvisible, these malicious powers naturally attack it invisibly. Both sides prepare their weapons, muster their forces,devise stratagems, clash in fearful battle, gain victories and suffer defeats. But this noetic warfare lacks one featurepossessed by visible warfare: declaration of hostilities. Suddenly, with no warning, the enemy attacks the inmostheart, sets an ambush there, and kills the soul through sin. And for what purpose is this battle waged against us? Toprevent us from doing God's will as we ask to do it when we pray 'Thy will be done'. This will is the commandmentsof God. If with the Lord's help through careful watchfulness you guard your intellect from error and observe theattacks of the demons and their snares woven of fantasy, you will see from experience that this is the case. For thisreason the Lord, foreseeing the demons' intentions by His divine power, set Himself to defeat their purpose bylaying down His commandments and by threatening those who break them.

8. Once we have in some measure acquired the habit of self-control, and have learnt how to shun visible sinsbrought about through 'the five senses, we will then be able to guard the heart with Jesus, to receive His illuminationwithin it,

and by means of the intellect to taste His goodness with a certain ardent longing. For we have beencommanded to purify the heart precisely so that, through dispelling the clouds of evil from it by continualattentiveness, we may perceive the sun of righteousness, Jesus, as though in clear sky; and so that the principles ofHis majesty may shine to some extent m the intellect. For these principles are revealed only to those who purify theirminds.

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9. We ought to make ourselves each day such as we should be when we are to appear before God. For the.prophet Hosea says: 'Hold fast to mercy and judgment, and always draw close to your God' (Hos. 12:6. LXX).Again, Malachi, speaking in God's name, says: 'A son honors his father, and a servant his lord. If 1 am a father,where is the honor due to me? And if 1 am Lord, where is the fear? So says the Lord Almighty' (Mai. 1:6. LXX).And St Paul states: 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all pollution of the flesh and spirit' (2 Cor. 7:1). And again.Wisdom says: 'Guard your heart with all diligence, for on this depends the outcome of life' (Prov. 4:23). And our

Lord Jesus Christ said: 'Cleanse first the inside of the cup, so that the outside may also be clean' (Matt. 23:26).

10. Untimely talk sometimes provokes hatred in those who listen, sometimes - when they note the folly of ourwords - abuse and derision. Sometimes it denies our conscience, or else brings upon us God's condemnation and,worst of all, causes us to offend against the Holy Spirit.

11. If with the Lord's help you cleanse your heart and uproot sin - struggling for the knowledge that is moredivine and seeing in your intellect things invisible to most people - you must not on this account be arrogant towardsanyone. For an angel, being incorporeal, is more pure and full of spiritual knowledge than any other created thing;yet it was an angel who, in exalting himself, fell like lightning from heaven. Thus his pride was reckoned by God asimpurity. But those who dig up gold are known to all.

12. St Paul says: 'The person engaged in spiritual warfare exercises self-control in all things' (1 Cor. 9:25). For,bound as we are to this wretched flesh, which always 'desires in a way that opposes the Spirit' (Gal. 5:17), we cannotwhen

sated with food stand firm against demonic principalities, against invisible and malevolent powers; 'for thekingdom of God is not food and drink' (Rom. 14:17), and 'the will of the flesh is hostile to God: for it is not subjectto the law of God, nor indeed can it be' (Rom. 8:7). It is clear that it cannot be because it is earthly, a compound ofhumors, blood and phlegm, and always gravitating downwards. Thus it is always attached to earthly things andrelishes the corrupting pleasures of the present life. 'For the will of the flesh is death' (Rom. 8:6); and 'they that arein the flesh cannot conform to God's will' (Rom. 8:8).

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13. Guarding the intellect with the Lord's help requires much humility, first in relation to God and then inrelation to men. We ought to do all we can to crush and humble the heart. To achieve this we should scrupulouslyremember our former life in the world, recalling and reviewing in detail all the sins we have committed sincechildhood (except carnal sins, for the remembrance of these is harmful). This not only induces humility but alsoengenders tears and moves us to give heartfelt thanks to God. Perpetual and vivid mindfulness of death has the sameeffect: it gives birth to grief accompanied by a certain sweetness and joy, and to watchfulness of intellect. Inaddition, the detailed remembrance of our Lord's Passion, the recollection of what He suffered, greatly humbles andabashes our pride, and this, too, produces tears. Finally, to recount and review all the blessings we have receivedfrom God is truly humbling. For our battle is against proud demons.

14. Do not reject out of self-love these saving medicines of the soul. If you do, you are no disciple of Christ orimitator of St Paul. For St Paul says: T am not fit to be called an apostle' (1 Cor. 15:9); and again: 'I was once ablasphemer and a persecutor and a violent, insolent man' (1 Tim. 1:13). Do you see, proud man, how the saint wasnot forgetful of his former life? Indeed, all the saints, from the beginning of creation to the present day, have put onthis lowliest holy cloak of God. Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, being God incomprehensible, unknown andineffable, wishing to show us the way of eternal life and holiness, was clothed in humility during His whole life inthe flesh. Thus holy humility ought truly to be called a divine virtue, a royal robe and commandment. Moreover, theangels and all the radiant and divine powers practice and preserve this virtue, knowing how Satan fell when he

became proud, and how he hes in the abyss as a fearful warning of such a fall to both angels and men. Through hispride he proved himself in God's sight more degraded than any other created thing: We also know what fall Adamfell through pride.

Since we have so many examples of this virtue that confers such blessings on the soul, let us follow them asfully as possible and humble ourselves in every way. Let us humble ourselves in soul and body, in thought and will,in words and ideas, in our outer bearing and our inner state. For unless we strive to do this we will

turn our advocate, Jesus Christ, the Son of God and God, against us. For the Lord 'ranges himself against the proud,but gives grace to the humble' (Jas. 4:6); and: 'Everyone that is arrogant is unclean before the Lord' (Proy. 16:5.LXX): and: 'He who humbles himself will be exalted' (Matt. 23:12)' and: 'Learn from Me, for I am gentle andhumble in heart' (Matt. 11:29). So we must be careful.

15. Our Savior says: 'Watch yourselves, lest your hearts be weighed down by dissipation, drunkenness andworldly cares' (Luke 21:34); and St Paul says: 'The person engaged in spiritual warfare exercises self-control in allthings' (1 Cor. 9:25). Aware of all that is said to us in divine Scripture, let us lead our life with self-control,especially in regard to food. Let us accustom our body to virtuous and orderly habits, nourishing it with moderation.For in this way the upsurges of the soul's desiring power are more easily calmed and subdued by its sovereignaspect, the intelligence; and in fact the same is true where the soul's mcensive power is concerned, as well as ourother faults. For those with experience regard virtue as consisting in an all-inclusive self-control, that is, in theavoidance of every kind of evil. For the pre-eminent source of purity is God, the source and giver of all blessings;but next comes self-control with regard to food, exercised in the same regular manner each day.

16. It is through us that Satan fights God, trying to nullify God's will, embodied as it is in the divine and life-giving commandments, by preventing us from carrying them out. Similarly, it is through us, and through the helpwhich He gives us, that God seeks to accomplish His holy- will and so to defeat the devil's

lethal purpose. In vaindoes the devil strive to oppose God by making men disobey the commandments; for God in His turn uses humanweakness to overthrow the devil's schemes. And you can see that this is the case. For it is evident that all thecommandments of the Gospel legislate for the tripartite soul and make it healthy through what they enjoin. They donot merely seem to make it healthy, but they actually have this effect. The devil, on the other hand, fights day andnight against the tripartite soul. But if he fights against it, it is clear that he fights against Christ's commandments,since Christ legislates for the tripartite soul through the commandments. The three parts of

the soul are represented by its incensive power, its desiring power and its intelligence.

Note how Christ says, 'Whoever is angry with his brother without good cause will be brought to judgment'(Matt. 5:22), and then tells us how anger may be healed. But the enemy in his turn tries to subvert thiscommandment by stirring up strife and thoughts of rancor and envy within us. For he too knows that the intelligenceshould control the mcensive power; and so, by bombarding the intelligence with evil thoughts-with thoughts ofenvy, strife, contention, guile, self-esteem-he persuades the intelligence to abandon its control, to hand the reins overto the-incensive power, and to let the latter go unchecked. And the incensive power, having so to speak unseated itsrider, disgorges through the mouth in the form of words all those things stored up in the heart as a result of thedevil's wiles and the intellect's negligence. And the heart is then seen to be full, not of the divine Spirit and ofgodlike thoughts, but of evil. It is as the Lord said: 'The mouth expresses what fills the heart' (Matt. 12:34). For if thedevil can induce the person he has taken possession of to utter what is harbored within, then that person will notmerely call his brother 'dolt' or 'fool' but may well pass from insulting words to murder. It is in these ways that thedevil fights against God and the commandment God gave about not being angry with one's brother without goodcause. But the insulting words and their consequences could have been avoided had their initial provocations beenexpelled from the heart through prayer and attentiveness. Thus the devil achieves his purpose when he makes

usbreak God's commandment by means of the thoughts that he insinuates into the heart.

17. What does the Lord command where the appetitive aspect or desiring power of the soul is concerned?'Whoever looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart' (Matt. 5:28). Aware ofthis injunction, the devil weaves a kind of mental net in order to undermine its effect. He does not attack us byexciting desire through an actual physical woman, but he operates inwardly by projecting into our intellectlascivious figures and images, and by insinuating words that rouse desire, and by other methods of this kind whichthose who have experience of the intellect know about.

18. What commandments are directed at the intelligence? 'I tell you, never swear an oath... but simply say "Yes"and "No"' (Matt. 5:34, 37); and: 'He who does not renounce everything and follow Me is not worthy of Me' (cfMatt. 10:37-38); and: 'Enter through the narrow gate' (Matt. 7:13). These are instructions to the intelligence. Again,the enemy - wanting to overpower the intelligence, a skilled commander - first addles its wits with gluttonous andpromiscuous thoughts, treating it derisively and dismissing it from its command as though it were a drunken general;then he uses anger and desire as servants of his own will. Free in this way from the control of the intelligence, thesepowers-the desiring and the mcensive powers-use the five senses as aids in sinning openly. And these are the sinsinto which we then fall: our eyes become inquisitive, not having the intellect controlling them from within; our earslove to hear frivolous things; our sense of smell becomes effeminate and our tongue unbridled, and our hands touchwhat they ought not to touch. With this goes injustice instead of justice, folly instead of moral judgment,licentiousness instead of self-restraint, slavishness instead of courage. For these four principal virtues - justice,moral judgment, self-restraint and courage-govern the three aspects of the soul. When these aspects are properlyguided, they keep the senses away from degrading things. Then the intellect, tranquil, its powers with God's help

under control and tractable, fights the noetic battle readily and bravely. But if, being inattentive, it is defeated by thedevil's provocations and its powers, are thrown into confusion, it breaks the divine commandments. Such violation,if not

followed by the appropriate degree of repentance, will certainly lead to chastisement in the future. Theintellect, consequently, should always be watchful. In this way it maintains its natural state and is a true guardian ofthe divine commandments.

19. The soul is walled off, fenced in and bound with chains of darkness by the demonic spirits. Because of thesurrounding darkness she cannot pray as she wants to, for she is fettered inwardly, and her inner eyes are blind. Onlywhen she begins to pray to God, and to acquire watchfulness while praying, will she be freed from this darknessthrough prayer. Otherwise she will remain a prisoner. For through prayer the soul discovers that there

is in the heart another fight and another hidden type of opposition, and a different kind of warfare against thethoughts provoked by the evil spirits. Holy Scripture bears witness to this when it says Tf the spirit of the ruler risesup against you, do not desert your place' (Eccles. 10:4). The place of the intellect is its firm stand in virtue and towatchfulness. For one can take a firm stand with respect to virtue and vice. Thus the psalmist says: 'Blessed is theman who has not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, and has not stood in the path of sinners' (Ps. 1:1); and StPaul says: 'Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth' (Eph.6:14).

20. With all our strength let us hold fast to Christ, for there are always those who struggle to deprive our soul ofHis presence; and let us take care lest Jesus withdraws because of the evil thoughts that crowd our soul (cf. John5:13). Yet we will not manage to hold Him without great effort on the soul's part. Let us study His life in the flesh,so that in our own life we may be humble. Let us absorb His sufferings, so that by emulating Him we may endureour afflictions patiently. Let us savor His ineffable incarnation and His work of salvation on our behalf, so that fromthe sweet taste in our soul we may know that the Lord is bountiful (cf. Ps. 34:8). Also, and above all, let usunhesitatingly trust in Him and in what He says; and let us daily wait on His providence towards us. And whateverform it takes, let us accept it gratefully, gladly and eagerly, so that we may learn to look only to God, who governsall things in accordance with the divine principles of His wisdom. If we do all these things, we are not far from

God;for godliness is 'perfection that is never complete', as one who was divinely inspired and-spiritually perfect has said.'

21. He who really redeems his life, always dwelling on the thought and remembrance of death, and wiselywithholding the intellect from the passions, is in a far better position to discern the continual presence of demonicprovocations than the man who chooses to live without being mindful of death. The latter, by purifying the heartthrough spiritual knowledge alone, but not keeping in mind any thought of grief, may sometimes appear to controlall the destructive passions by his skill; yet he is unwittingly fettered by

one of them, the worst aU - pride, into which, abandoned by God, he sometimes falls. Such a person mast be veryvigilant lest, deluded by conceit, he becomes deranged. For, as St Paul says (cf. 1 Cor. 4:6, 18, 19; 8:1), souls thatgather knowledge from here and there tend to become .haughty and disdainful towards their inferiors, as they regardthem; they lack the spark of the love which builds up. But he who all the day long is mindful of death discerns theassaults of the demons more keenly; and he counterattacks and repels them.

22. The blessed remembrance of God - which is the very presence of Jesus - with a heart full of wrath and asaving animosity against the demons, dissolves all trickeries of thought, plots, argumentation, fantasies, obscureconjectures and, in short, everything with which the destroyer arms himself and which he insolently deploys in hisattempt to swallow our souls. When Jesus is invoked. He promptly bums up everything. For our salvation lies inChrist Jesus alone. The Savior Himself made this clear when He said: 'Without Me you can do nothing' (John 15:5).

23. At every hour and moment let us guard the heart with all diligence from thoughts that obscure the soul'smirror; for in that mirror Jesus Christ, the wisdom and power of God the Father (cf. 1 Cor. 1:24), is typified andluminously reflected. And let us unceasingly seek the kingdom of heaven inside our heart (cf. Luke 17:21), the seed(cf. Luke 13:19), the pearl (cf. Matt. 13: 45) and the leaven (cf. Matt. 13:33). Indeed, if we cleanse the eye of theintellect we will find

all things hidden within us. This is why our Lord Jesus Christ said that the kingdom of heavenis within us, indicating that the Divinity dwells in our hearts.

24. Watchfulness cleanses the conscience and makes it lucid. Thus cleansed, it immediately shines out like alight that has been uncovered, banishing much darkness. Once this darkness has been banished through constant andgenuine watchfulness, the conscience then reveals things hidden from us. Through the intellect it teaches us how tofight the unseen war and the mental battle by means of watchfulness, how we must throw spears when engaged insingle combat and strike with well-aimed lances of thought, and how the intellect must escape being hit and' avoidthe noxious darkness by hiding itself in Christ, the tight for which it longs. He who has tasted this light willunderstand what I am talking about.

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St Philotheos of Sinai

Forty Texts on Watchfulness

The soul is never sated with it, but the more it feeds on it, the hungry it grows. It is a light that attracts the intellect asthe sun the eye. Inexplicable, it yet becomes explicable through experience. This experience I have known or, moreprecisely, I have been wounded by it; but it commands me to be silent, even though my intellect would delight inspeaking of it. 'Pursue peace with all men and the holiness without which no one will see the Lord' (Heb. 12:14). Dothis in order to acquire love and purity, for these are peace and holiness.

25. You must direct your wrath only against the demons, for they wage war upon us through our thoughts andare full of anger against us. As regards the manner of the hourly warfare within us, listen and act accordingly.Combine prayer with inner watchfulness, for watchfulness purifies prayer, while prayer purifies watchfulness. It isthrough unceasing watchfulness that we can perceive what is entering into us and can to some extent close the door

against it, calling upon our Lord Jesus Christ to repel our malevolent adversaries. Attentiveness obstructs thedemons by rebutting them; and Jesus, when invoked, disperses them together with all their fantasies.

26. Be extremely strict in guarding your intellect. When you perceive an evil

thought, rebut it and immediatelycall upon Christ to defend you; and while you are still speaking, Jesus in His gentle love will say: 'Behold, I am byyour side ready to help you.' When this whole detachment of the enemy has been put out of action through prayer,again turn your attention to your intellect. There you will see a succession of waves worse than before, with the soulswimming among them. But again, awakened by His disciple, Jesus as God will rebuke the winds of evil (cf. Matt.8:23-27). Having found respite for an hour perhaps, or for a moment, glorify Him who has saved you, and meditateon death.

27. Let us go forward with the heart completely attentive and the soul fully conscious. For if attentiveness andprayer are daily joined together, they become like Elijah's fire-bearing chariot (cf 2 Kgs. 2:11), raising us to heaven.What do I mean? A spiritual heaven, with sun, moon and stars, is formed in the blessed heart of one who hasreached a state of watchfulness, or who strives to attain it; for such a heart, as a result of mystical contemplation andascent, is enabled to contain within itself the uncontainable God. If,

then, you aspire to holiness. Cry with God's help to invoke the Lord and wholeheartedly to turn words into actions.By restraining with a certain forcefulness the five senses through which the soul can be injured, you with certainlymake the struggle within the heart lighter for the intellect. So, by means of certain ploys, keep out all externalenemies, and with incorporeal. God-given weapons fight against the thoughts .which they produce inside you. Avertsensual pleasure through strenuous vigils, and be sparing in food and drink. Keep the body properly slim so that youreduce the burden of the heart's warfare, with full benefit to yourself. Chastise your soul with the thought of death,and through remembrance of Jesus Christ concentrate your scattered intellect. It is particularly at night that theintellect grows lucid in its radiant contemplation of God and of divine realities.

28. We should not reject the practice of bodily asceticism; for as wheat comes from the earth, so from suchpractice grows spiritual joy and benediction. Nor should we try to evade our conscience when it speaks to us ofthings conducive to salvation that we ought to do, and constantly tells us what is right and what is our duty. This itdoes especially when purified through active, applied, and

meticulous watchfulness of intellect; for then, owing toits pure state, the judgments of the conscience tend to be all-embracing, to the point, and indisputable. So it shouldnot be evaded, since it tells us inwardly how to live in conformity to God's will, and by severely censuring the soulwhen the mind has been infected by sins, and by admonishing the erring heart to repent, it provides welcomecounsel as to how our defective state can be cured.

29. Smoke from wood kindling a fire troubles the eyes; but then the fire gives them light and gladdens them.Similarly, unceasing attentiveness is irksome; but when, invoked in prayer, Jesus draws near. He illumines the heart;for remembrance of Him confers on us spiritual enlightenment and the highest of all blessings.

30. Forcing his way into our intellect, our enemy tries to compel us - created in God's image though we are - to

eat the dust and to creep on our bellies as he does (of. Gen. 3:14). This is why God says: 'I will put enmity betweenyou and him' (of. Gen. 3:16). Hence we must always breathe God, so that we are

never wounded by the devil's fiery darts (cf. Eph. 6:16). 'I shall protect him'. He says, 'because he has known Myname' (Ps. 91:14. LXX); and: 'His salvation is near those who fear Him' (Ps. 85:9).

31. St Paul, the 'chosen vessel' (Acts 9:15) who spoke In Christ' (2 Cor. 2:17), out of his great experience ofinvisible noetic warfare wrote to the Ephesians: 'We do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against demonicprincipalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the celestialregions' (Eph. 6:12). And the Apostle Peter says: 'Be watchful, be vigilant, because your adversary, the devil, walksabout like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Stand against him, steadfast in faith' (1 Pet. 5:8). And ourLord Jesus Christ, speaking of the various attitudes of those who hear the words of the Gospel, says: 'Then comesthe devil, and snatches the word out of their hearts' - that is to say, he steals it by inducing them to forget it - 'lestthey should believe and be saved' (Luke 8:12). And again Paul says: 'For with the inward man I delight in the law ofGod; but I see another law ... warring

against the law of my intellect, and bringing me into captivity' (Rom. 7:22-23). They said these things to instruct and enlighten us about what we fail to perceive.

32. In the absence of self-reproach and humility, spiritual knowledge puffs us up, making us feel superior toothers (cf. 1 Cor. 8:1). But if we are aware of our own weakness we will keep in mind Paul's words when he says:'My brethren, it is not as though I had already grasped it or were already perfect... but forgetting what lies behind,and reaching forward to what lies in front, I pursue my purpose, aiming at the prize of the high calling of God' (Phil.3:13-14). And again; 'I do not run aimlessly, nor do I box by beating the air with my fists. But I discipline my bodyharshly, and bring it into subjection; for I fear lest, after preaching to others, I myself should be cast away' (1 Cor.9:26-27). Do you not see how humility is a road to holiness, and what humility the great. St Paul had? He said:'Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am the worst' (1 Tim. 1:15). Should we not humble ourselves,then, because of the lowliness of our nature? For what is more lowly than day? And we must be mindful of God,since we have been created for this. But we must also practice

self-control, so that with our Lord's help we may advance unhampered in the spiritual life.

33. The person who gives himself over to evil thoughts cannot keep his outer self free from sin; and if evilthoughts have not been uprooted from the heart, they are .bound to manifest themselves in evil actions. We look onthings adulterously because the inner eye has become adulterous and darkened; and we want to hear about foul

things because our soul's ears have listened to what the foul demons inside us have whispered to us. Consequently,with the Lord's help, we must cleanse ourselves -withm and without. We must guard our senses and free each ofthem from impassioned and sinful influences. And just as, ignorant and full of futility, we used to live in the worldwith intellect and senses enslaved to the deceit of sin, so now, having changed to the life according to God, we mustdedicate intellect

and senses to the service of the living and true God, and of God's justice and will.

34. First there is provocation; then a coupling with the provocation; then assent to it; then captivity to it; thenpassion, grown habitual and continuous. This is how the holy fathers describe the stages through which the devilgets the better of us.

35. Provocation, they say, is a thought still free from passion, or an image newly engendered in the heart andglimpsed by the intellect. Coupling is to commune with this thought or image, in either an impassioned or adispassionate way. Assent is the pleasurable acceptance by the soul of the thing seen. Captivity is the forcible andenforced abduction of the heart, or persistent intercourse with the object, disrupting even our best state. Passion, inthe strict sense, they define as that which lurks impassionably in the soul over a long period. Of these stages the firstis sinless; the second, not altogether free from sin; the sinfulness of the third stage depends on our inner state; andthe struggle itself brings us either punishment or crowns of victory.

36. Captivity is one thing at the time of prayer, another when we are not engaged in prayer. Passion, however,incontestably leads either to a corresponding repentance or to future chastisement. But the person who rebuffsthe initial provocation, or who regards

it dispassionately, has at one stroke cut off all the sinful stages that follow. Such, then, is the strategy employed bythe evil demons in their war against both those who are monks and those who are not; and the issue is either defeator victory, as we have said. The victors are rewarded with crowns; those who fall and do not repent are punished. Solet us wage noetic war against the demons, lest we translate their evil purposes into sinful actions. Let us cut sin outof our heart, and we will find within us the kingdom of heaven (cf. Luke 17:21). Let us preserve our heart's purityand always be filled with deep compunction towards God through this best of undertakings.

37. Many monks are not aware how the demons deceive the intellect. Being naive and undeveloped, they tendto give all their attention to the practice of the

virtues and do not bother about the intellect. They move through life, Ifear, without having tasted purity of heart, and are totally ignorant of the darkness of the passions within. Suchpeople, unaware of the battle about which Paul speaks (cf. Eph. 6:12) and not imbued with personal experience oftrue goodness, regard as lapses only those sins which are actually put into effect. They do not take into account thedefeats and the victories that occur on the plane of thought, for these, bemg internal, cannot be seen by natural sightand are known only to God our judge, and to the conscience of the spiritual contestant. I take it that the scripturalwords, 'They said, "Peace", but there was no peace' (Ezek. 13:10), apply to such people. The other brethren pray forthem in their simplicity, and as best they can teach them to avoid the actual commission of sin. But for those whohave a divine desire to cleanse the vision of the soul there is another form of activity in Christ and another mystery.

38. Vivid mindfulness of death embraces many virtues. It begets grief; it promotes the exercise of self-control inall things; it is a reminder of hell; it is the mother of prayer and tears; it induces guarding of the heart anddetachment from material things; it is a source of attentiveness and discrimination. These in their turn produce thetwofold fear of God. In addition, the purging of impassioned thoughts from the heart embraces many of the Lord'scommandments. The harsh hour-by-hour struggle in which so many athletes of Christ are engaged has as its aimprecisely this purging of the heart.

St Philotheos of Sinai

Forty Texts on Watchfulness

39. An unexpected event or misfortune considerably disrupts the mind's attentiveness; and, by dislodging theintellect from its concentration on higher realities and from its noble state of virtue, it diverts it towards sinfulquarrelsomeness and wrangling. The cause of this overthrow is assuredly our lack of attention to the enemy'sattacks.

40. None of the painful things that happen to us every day will injure or distress us once we perceive andcontinually meditate on their purpose. It is on account of this that St Paul says: 'I take delight in weakness, insultsand hardships' (2 Cor. 12:10); and: 'AH who seek to live a holy life in Christ Jesus will suffer

persecution' (2 Tim.3:12). To Him be glory through all the ages. Amen.

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Ilias the Presbyter

{? Late 11th — early 12 century)(Volume 3, pp. 32-65)

Introductory Note

'Ilias the Presbyter and Ekdikos', as he is called in the manuscripts, was - so his designation suggests - a lawyer whosubsequently entered the ranks of the clergy. The title ekdikos signifies a judge attached to the ecclesiastical court atthe Great Church of the Holy Wisdom ('St Sophia') in Constantinople. Evidently Ilias resigned from this legal post,becoming in all probability a monk before his ordination to the priesthood. He seems to have lived around the end ofthe eleventh or the beginning of the twelfth century. It is possible, although not certain, that he knew the writings ofSt Symeon the New Theologian (949-1022), whose influence some have detected in what Ilias says about tears andthe divine light. He cannot in any case be later than the twelfth century, since the earliest manuscript of his workdates from this time. He may be the same person as Ilias, Metropolitan of Crete in the early twelfth century, theauthor of commentaries on St Gregory of Nazianzos and St John Klimakos.'

In the surviving manuscripts A Gnomic Anthology appears variously under the names of St John of Karpathos(?seventh century)," St Maximos the Confessor (580-662),^ and Ilias himself. Almost certainly the third of theseattributions is correct. Although styled an 'anthology', the work is not in fact a collection of excerpts from otherauthors but is Ilias' own composition. It is divided into four sections, each preceded by a couplet in verse. (The

Greek Philokalia provides

' St Nikodimos suspends judgment here. The identification is accepted by V. Laurent, in Kevue des etudes byzamines xvi (19(8). pp. 121—5,and in Diawnnaire d'histoire et de geographic tcclesiasiKfnes xv (1963), col. 187-8; but it is denied by M.-Th. Disdier, 'Elic I'Ecdicos et leshetera kephalaia attribucs a saint Maxime le Confesseur et a Jean de Carpathos', Echos d'Oncnt xxxi (i»}2), pp. 17-43. On the theology of llias,see also M.-Th. Disdier, 'La vie spirituelle scion Elie I'Ecdicos', Echos d'Onem xxxi (1952), pp. 144-64; J. Darrouzes,

mDicuonnam de spimuahifiv (1960), col. nfr-8; N. G. Politis, "The path to contemplation in llias the Ekdikos' (in Greek), Epetiris Hetairew Vyzantinon Spoudon xliii(1977—8), pp. 345—64.

' See The Philokalia, vol. i, p. 297.

' Op. cit., vol. ii (London &. Boston, 1981), p. 48.

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Introductory Note

continuous numbering for parts I-II, and likewise for parts III-IV, but there are in reality four parts, not two.) Thepoetic epigraphs provide a general indication of the contents of each section:

Part I: moral teaching (fasting, ascetic effort, the vices and virtues, with special emphasis on humility).

Part II: prayer.

Part III: spiritual contemplation (with particular reference to 'natural contemplation' or the 'contemplation ofnature', that is, knowledge of the inner essences or principles of created things - of what in III, 13 are termed 'theworld's foundations').

Part IV: the practice of the virtues (praxis) and contemplation (theoria) (taking up all the main themes mentioned

in the earlier parts).

llias delights in vivid imagery taken from the world of nature, and also employs the nuptial symbolism of theSong of Songs. Like St Maximos, he makes a clear distinction between 'thought', on the discursive and rationallevel, and 'intellection', understood as the non-discursive apprehension of spiritual truth (III, 1-5). FollowingEvagrios, he speaks about a vision of the innate 'luminosity' of the intellect (II, 82, 89); beyond this, there is thehigher vision of the divine light, in which the body also shares (II, 104-6). Here the Gnomic Anthology pointsforward to the teaching of the fourteenth-century Hesychasts, especially St Gregory Palamas. Four times llias refersto evchi monologistos, 'single-phrased

prayer' (II, 94, 104; IV, 65, 75), a term that links him with the Sinaite 'school'.In St John Klimakos this expression, used with the additional word lisoii, 'of Jesus', definitely signifies the JesusPrayer,' and in our translation we have taken the view that llias means it in the same sense, although in the Greek hedoes not actually add the qualification 'of Jesus'.

In making our English version we have compared the text in the Greek Philokalia with that found among theworks of St Maximos (P.G. xc, 1401-61): the latter frequently, but by no means invariably, gives a better sense.

Subtle and highly concentrated, the short paragraphs of the Gnomic Anthology disclose their true meaning only ifread with unusually close attention. Few other authors have been able, in so short a space, to provide such acomprehensive guide to the spiritual way.

'Ladder, Step 15 (8890; E.T, p. 154).

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Ilias the PresbyterA Gnomic Anthology

Parti

Here you will find, if you truly search,Afiowing spring, a pure fount of moral teaching.

1. No Christian believing rightly in God should ever be off his guard. He should

always be on the look-out fortemptation, so that when it comes he will not be surprised or disturbed, but will gladly endure the toil and afflictionit causes, and so will understand what he is saying when he chants with the prophet: 'Prove me, 0 Lord, and try me'(Ps. 26:2. LXX). For the prophet did not say, 'Thy correction has destroyed me', but, 'it has upheld me to the end'(Ps. 18:35. LXX).

2. The first step towards excellence is fear of God, the last is loving desire for Him.

3. The first step towards perfection is spiritual knowledge put into practice and practice imbued with spiritualknowledge. For practice without such knowledge is of no value, and so is such knowledge when unaccompanied bypractice.

4. Practice where the body is concerned consists of fasting and vigil; where the mouth is concerned it consists ofpsalmody. But prayer is better than psalmody, and silence is more valuable than speech. In the case of the hands,practice is what they do uncomplainingly; and of the feet, it is what they do as soon as they are urged to do it.

5. Where the soul is concerned, practice is self-control accompanied by simplicity, and simplicity animated byself-control.

6. In the case of the intellect, practice is prayer in contemplation and contemplation in prayer.

7. Mercy and truth precede all the other virtues. They in their turn produce humility and so discrimination; for,according to the fathers,

discrimination conies from humility. Without discrimination, neither practice nor spiritual knowledge can fulfill itspurpose. For practice uncontrolled by such knowledge strays here and there aimlessly, like a calf; while knowledgethat refuses to clothe itself in the honorable vesture of practice lacks nobility, however much it may pretend topossess it.

8. A courageous soul acts correctly when it is master of both practice and contemplation, like a woman who keeps

two lamps burning throughout her hfe. But a soul debilitated by sensual pleasure fails to do what it should.

9. Suffering deliberately embraced cannot free the soul totally from sin unless the soul is also tried in the fire ofsuffering that comes unchosen. For the soul is like a sword: if it does not go 'through fire and water' (Ps. 66:12.LXX) - that is, through suffering deliberately embraced and suffering that comes unchosen - it cannot but beshattered by the blows of fortune.

10. Trials and temptations subject to our volition are chiefly caused by health, wealth and reputation, and thosebeyond our control by sickness, material losses and slander. Some people are helped by these things, others aredestroyed by them.

11. Desire and distress subsist in the soul; sensual pleasure and pain in the body. Sensual pleasure gives rise topain, and pain to sensual pleasure (for, wanting to escape the wearisome feeling of pain, we take refuge in sensualpleasure); while desire results in distress.

12. The virtuous may appear to be bad, but essentially they are good; superficially the self-important and pleasure-loving may appear to be good, but basically they are evil.

13. The person who hates evil commits it but seldom and then not intentionally. But the person attached to thecauses of evil commits it frequently and deliberately.

14. Those who deliberately refuse to repent sin continually; those who sin without meaning to not only repentwith all their heart, but also do not often have cause to repent.

15. Let your words combine insight and self-awareness, so that the peaceable divine Logos may not be ashamedto enshrine Himself in them because of their brashness and lack of restraint.

16. A person may have sullied his soul with words even if he has not degraded it by actions; and he may still beimpure in his

thoughts even if he watches over his words. For there are three different ways of sinning.

17. You will not be able to perceive the face of virtue so long as you still look on vice with a feeling of pleasure.But vice will appear hateful to you when you hunger for the taste of virtue and avert your gaze from every form ofevil.

18. Demons wage war against the soul primarily through thoughts, not through things; for things fight against usin their own right. Hearing and sight are responsible for the warfare waged through things, habit and the demons forthat waged through thoughts.

19. The soul is liable to sin in three ways: in actions, in words, and in thoughts. We attain freedom from sin in sixways: by preserving the purity of the five senses and of the spoken word. Whoever succeeds in doing this is indeedperfect, capable also of keeping every aspect of the body under control.

20. The soul's non-intelligent or passible aspect consists of the five senses and the faculty of speech. When in astate of dispassion, the faculty of speech is preserved fully integrated with the soul's passible aspect; but when in animpassioned state, it receives the evil influences that the passible aspect communicates to it.

21. The body cannot be purified without fasting and vigil, the soul without mercy and truth, and the intellectwithout contemplation of God and communion with Him. These pairs constitute the principal virtues in these threeaspects of the human person.

22. When the soul moves in obedience to these virtues, her citadel - patient endurance - is not disturbed bytemptations. 'You will gain possession of your souls through your patient endurance' (Luke 21:19), says the Logos.Otherwise the soul will be shaken by fits of cowardice, as an unwalled city is by a distant uproar.

23. Not all those who are discreet in their words are also circumspect in their thought. Nor are all those who arecircumspect in their thought also discreet where their external senses are concerned. For although all men are subjectto the senses, not all pay them the same amount of tribute. In their artlessness, most men do not know the price thesenses demand for what they supply.

24. Although moral judgment is by nature indivisible, there are none the less different degrees of it One personmay be given more of it, another less, so that practical virtue, having grown with the help of the principal virtues,may bring to fruition in each person the

goodness of which he is capable. But most people fail to a greater or lesser degree to practice the virtues, and thedegree of moral judgment granted to them varies accordingly.

25. Few are circumspect with regard to what is according to nature, but many with regard to what is contrary tonature. For having expended out of fear all their intrinsic quota of circumspection on what is contrary to nature, theyhave little left to exercise with regard to what is according to nature. Indeed, they expend most of it on superfluousthings and what is by nature worthless.

26. A sense of the right moment and a sense of proportion go hand in hand with an intelligent silence. Truth is thebanquet of all the three together. Where there is such a banquet, the father of lies, confronting a soul as it departsfrom this life, will not find in it any of the things he looks for.

27. A truly merciful person is not one that deliberately gives away superfluous things, but one that forgives thosewho deprive him of what he needs.

28. Some men through acts of charity acquire spiritual wealth by means of material wealth; others renounce theirmaterial wealth altogether on becoming aware of the spiritual wealth that is inexhaustible.

29. Everyone likes to be rich in spiritual blessings, but it is grievous to be rich in

such blessings and not to beallowed to enjoy them for long.

30. From the outside a soul may appear to be healthy, while within, in the depths of consciousness, it may suffer

from some hidden sickness. It can be healed from the outside through being pierced by reproof, and from withinthrough the renewal of the intellect. Whoever, then, rejects such reproof, and shamelessly continues to lie on his bedin the sickroom of lethargy, is a fool.

31. Do not be angry with a person who unwittingly operates on you like a surgeon. Look rather at the abominationhe has removed and, blaming yourself, bless him because through God's grace he has been of such service to you.

32. If you are concerned for your soul's health, do not despair of your sickness as though it were incurable; butapply to it the potent medicine of ascetic effort and you will get rid of it.

33. Do not shun the person who opportunely berates you; but go to him and he will show you how much evil lieshidden from your

consciousness. Once you have swallowed the bitter and nauseous draught, you will taste the sweet nourishment ofhealth.

34. The greater the pain that you feel, the more you should welcome the person whose reproof makes you feel it.For he is bringing about within you that total purification without which your intellect cannot attain the pure state ofprayer.

35. When you are reproved, you ought either to remain silent, or else gently to defend yourself to your accuser—not indeed in order to gain his approval, but to help him rise up in case he has stumbled by reproving you inignorance.

36. If someone is rightly offended with you, but you repent before he calls on you to do so, you lose nothing; butif you repent only after you have been asked

to, you forfeit half the harvest. If you never cause estrangement bygiving offence to others, you recover all the seed that you sowed; but if you always put the blame on yourself, yougain in addition more than you originally laid out.

37. A haughty person is not aware of his faults, or a humble person of his good Qualities. An evil ignorance blindsthe first, an ignorance pleasing to God blinds the second.

38. As regards his good qualities, the proud man does not want to be compared with his equals; but as regards hisfailings, he is quite content to be compared with those worse than himself.

39. Reproof strengthens the soul, whereas praise debilitates it and makes it even more sluggish in its spiritualstruggle.

40. The substance of wealth is gold; of virtue, humility. Just as he who lacks gold is poor, even though this maynot be outwardly apparent, so the spiritual aspirant who lacks humility is not virtuous.

41. Lacking gold, a merchant is not a merchant, even though he may be very skilful in trading; similarly, lackinghumility, a spiritual aspirant will never possess the joys of virtue, however great the confidence he places in his own

intelligence.

42. The higher a man ascends in humility, the lower he appears in his own eyes; but if he lacks humility, thehigher he appears. The humble man does not wish to be compared even with the most lowly, and is grieved when heis given first place at table (cf Luke 14:7-10).

43. It is good for the spiritual aspirant to regard a task as beyond him, but to be in his actions superior to thisdiffidence. In this way he will both earn men's respect and in God's sight will be 'a worker who has no cause to beashamed' (2 Tim. 2:25).

44. He who is afraid of being cast out of the bridal chamber as an interloper (cf. Matt. 22:11-13) should eithercarry out all God's commandments, or else should strive to fulfill just one of them - humility.

45. Combine simplicity with self-control, and unite truth with humility, and you will keep house with justice, atwhose table every other virtue likes to gather.

46. Truth without humility is blind. That is why it becomes contentious: it tries to support itself on something, andfinds nothing except rancor.

47. A good character testifies to the beauty of virtue, just as soundness of body bears witness to a peaceful soul.

48. It is best not to go astray at all. Second best is not to hide your error through shame, or be shameless about it,but to humble yourself and, when reproved, to reprove yourself likewise, gladly accepting the punishment. If you donot do this, everything you offer to God is valueless.

49. In addition to voluntary suffering, you must also accept that which comes against your will -1 mean slander,material losses and sickness. For if you do not accept these but rebel against them, you are like someone who wantsto eat his bread only with honey, never with salt. Such a man does not always have pleasure as his companion, butalways has nausea as his neighbor.

50. He who washes his neighbor's garment with inspired words, or who sews it up by contributing to his needs,has the outward appearance of a servant, but is really a master. But when he acts in this way he must be careful to doso truly as a servant, lest by growing conceited he loses both his reward and his proper rank.

51. Just as faith gives substance to the things for which we hope (cf. Heb. 11:1), so moral judgment givessubstance to the soul and humility to virtue. And it is extraordinary how things perfect in themselves becomeimperfect when deprived of the qualities that should be associated with them.

52. 'The Lord will guard your going out and your coming in' (Ps. 121:8): that is. He will enable you by means ofself-control to watch over the food you-take in and the words you give out. For the person who exercises self-controlover food and speech escapes the desire that enters through the eyes, and calms the anger that issues from adisordered mind. The spiritual aspirant must exercise the

greatest

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care and exert himself in every way in relation to these two passions. By so doing he will strengthen his practice ofthe virtues and put his contemplation on a sound basis.

53. Some are most careful about the food they take in but negligent about the words they give out. To adaptEcclesiastes (11:10. LXX), such men do not know how to remove anger from the heart or desire from the flesh.Only through the removal of these things is a pure heart established within us by the renewing Spirit (cf Ps. 51:10).

54. You can achieve frugality by lowering the quantity of your food, and smlessness in speech by raising thequality of your silence.

55. Sear your loins by abstaining from food, and prove your heart by controlling your speech, and you willsucceed in bringing the desiring and mcensive powers of your soul into the service of what is noble and good.

56. Sexual desire diminishes in the spiritual aspirant once the body has passed its prime; but gluttony continuesunless properly disciplined. You must try to prevent the disgrace of the effect by removing its cause; otherwise inthe life to come you will be found lacking in the virtue of self-control and will be covered with shame.

57. The ascetic has to know when and by means of what foods to treat the body as an enemy, when to encourageit as a friend, and when to succor it as an invalid. Otherwise he may unwittingly offer to the friend what is proper forthe enemy, or to the enemy what is proper for the friend, and to the invalid what is proper for either of the other two;and having alienated all three he may find them fighting against him in time of temptation.

58. If, when eating, the nourishment in your food is more important to you than its savor, then the grace of tearswill be given to you and you will begin to find

spiritual refreshment; and you will forget all other taste, relishing itssweetness beyond that of anything else.

59. The tears of the man who scatters his energies dry up, but they gush forth in the man who keeps to the narrowpath(cf Matt. 7:13-14).

60. Neither the sinner nor the righteous man is free from remorse: the first, because he has not altogetherabandoned evil; the second, because he has not yet attained perfection.

61. Among the things that lie within our power are the virtues of prayer and silence; among the things that dependfor the most part not on us, but on the constitution of the body, are fasting and vigil. Hence

the spiritual aspirant must try to attain whatever is more accessible to him.

61. Patience is the house of the soul, for in it the soul is safeguarded. Humility is the soul's wealth, for the soul isnourished through it.

63. If you do not bear criticism patiently, you will not be honored with praise. If before indulging in pleasure youreflect on the pain inherent in it, you will escape the distress to which it gives birth.

64. Do not fetter yourself to a small thing and you will not be enslaved to a greater one. For the greater evil isbuilt up only on the basis of the smaller.

63. By being mindful of greater evils, you will also be fearful of smaller ones; but if you give way to the greaterevils, you will shamefully indulge in the lesser as well.

66. You will not be able to attain the greater virtues until you have fully achieved those which lie within yourpower.

67. In those in whom mercy and truth prevail, everything is godlike; for truth

judges no one without mercy, whilemercy never manifests compassion apart from truth.

68. Having united simplicity and self-control, you will experience the blessing which their union produces.

69. You will not be able to cut down the passions attacking you unless you first leave unfilled the soil from whichthey are fed.

70. Some try to purify only the matter of the body, others that of the soul as well. The first gain a certain controlwith regard to the actual committing of a sin, the second with regard to the passion behind it. But extremely few gaincontrol over the underlying desire.

71. Passionateness is the evil matter of the body; self-indulgence, that of the soul; impassioned craving, that of theintellect. Touch is responsible for the first; the rest of the senses for the second; and a perverse disposition for thethird.

72. The self-indulgent man is close to the impassioned man; and the man of impassioned craving to the self-indulgent man. Far from all three is the dispassionate man.

73. The impassioned man is strongly prone to sin in thought, even though for the time being he does not sinoutwardly. The self-indulgent man actually commits the sin suggested in thought, even though he suffers inwardly.The man of impassioned craving is given over freely or, rather, servilely, to .the various modes of sinning. The

dispassionate man is not dominated by any of these degrees of passion.74. Passionateness is removed from the soul through fasting and prayer, self-indulgence through vigil and silence;

and impassioned craving through stillness and attentiveness. Dispassion is established through remembrance of God.

75. Words of eternal life drop from the lips of dispassion like honey from the honeycomb (cf. Song of Songs4:11). Who then is worthy of touching her lip with his own, of lying between her breasts (cf. Song of Songs 1:13),and smelling the fragrance of her clothes (cf. Song of Songs 4:10, 11) - that is to say, of rejoicing in the laws of thevirtues which are, it is said, superior to all the perfumes perceived by the senses?

76. Many may be stripped of the coat of self-love, but few of the coat of worldly display; while only thedispassionate are free from self-esteem, the last coat of all.

77. Every soul will be stripped of the visible body; but only the soul that has indulged but sparsely in the pleasuresof this life will be stripped of the body of sin.

78. All who live will die; but to sin will die only those who have consciously hated it.

79. Who will see himself stripped of sin prior to the ordinary death of the body? And prior to the future stripping,who is there that knows himself and his own nature?

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Prayer unites with the BridegroomA soul wounded by nuptial love.

80. The deiform soul, placed as it is on the frontier between sensible and spiritual light, is enabled through theformer to see and do what pertains to the body, and through the latter what pertains to the Spirit. But as a result ofman's inveterate habit of mind, the light of the Spirit has grown dim within the soul, whereas the light of the sensibleworld shines more brightly within it. Consequently, it cannot fix its attention totally on things divine unless it iswholly united with intelligible light during prayer. In this way, it is compelled to stand midway between darknessand light, linked to spiritual light through participation, and to sensible light by means of the fantasy.

81. An intellect subject to passion cannot penetrate the narrow gate of prayer until it abandons the cares to whichit has attached itself. So long as it remains continually occupied with bodily matters, it will inflict suffering on itself.

82. Let prayer inhere in the intellect as a ray in the sun. If the intellect lacks prayer, then worldly cares, like'clouds driven-about by the wind and bringing no rain' (Jude, verse 12), deprive it of its native luminosity.

83. Strength to pray lies in the deliberate privation of food, and strength to go without food lies in not seeing orhearing about worldly things except when strictly necessary. He who is negligent in this fails to build his fasting ona firm foundation, and so he brings about the collapse of the whole edifice of prayer, which itself is based on fasting.

84. If the intellect does not become detached from all sensible things, it cannot rise upwards and realize its truedignity.

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85. Fasting corresponds to daylight, because it is clearly manifest; prayer corresponds to night, because it isinvisible. He who practices each of these rightly, the one in conjunction with the other, will attain his goal, the cityfrom which 'pain, sorrow and sighing have fled away' (Isa. 35:10. LXX).

86. Spiritual work can exist even without bodily labor. Blessed, therefore, is the man who regards spiritual workas superior to physical work: through the first he makes up for any deficiency where the second is concerned,because he lives the hidden life of prayer that is manifest to God.

87. St Paul exhorts us to persevere in the faith, to rejoice in hope, and to persist steadfastly in prayer (cf. Rom.12:12), so that the blessing of joy may be with us. If this is so, then he who fails to persevere lacks faith, and he whodoes not rejoice lacks hope. For he has abandoned prayer-the source of joy-by not persisting in it.

88. If the intellect has become so closely attached to worldly thoughts through its

inveterate involvement withthem, how intimate would it not become with prayer if it prayed unceasingly? For, it is said, the intellect willflourish in whatever it makes its constant occupation.

89. Because of long absence from its true home, the intellect has forgotten the luminosity it enjoyed there; hence itmust once more become oblivious to things in this world and hasten back to its true home through prayer.

90. Sometimes prayer will fail to bring spiritual refreshment to the intellect, just as a mother's breasts, when theycease to give milk, will not solace her child. At other times the intellect in prayer is like a child that sleepscontentedly in its mother's arms.

91. In the contrite bridal-bed of the virtuous life the bride-prayer - says to her lover: "I will give you my breasts ifyou dedicate yourself wholly to me' (cf. Song of Songs 7:12).

92. You cannot become intimate with prayer unless you have renounced all material things.

93. During prayer alienate yourself from everything except life and breath if you want to be with the intellectalone.

94. Evidence of an intellect devoted to God is its absorption in the single-phrased Jesus Prayer; of an adroitintelligence, opportune speech; of a non-attached sense-perception, simplicity in taste. When such evidence ispresent in all three cases, the soul's powers are said to be in good health.

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95. The nature of the person who prays must be supple and malleable, like that of children, so that it is receptive

to the development brought about by prayer. Thus, if you want to be united with prayer, do not be neghgent.

96. Not all have the same purpose in prayer: one man has one purpose, another has another. One prays that, ifpossible, his heart may always be absorbed in prayer; another, that he may even transcend prayer; and a third, that hemay not be hindered by thoughts during prayer. But all pray either to be preserved in what is good, or not to becarried away by evil.

97. If everyone is humbled by prayer-for he who prays with humility is brought to compunction-it follows thatanyone outwardly boastful is not praying in a state of humility.

98. Bearing in mind the widow who persuaded the cruel judge to avenge her (cf Luke 18:2-5), the man who prayswill never lose heart because the blessings to be gained through prayer are slow in arriving.

99. Prayer deserts you if you give attention to thoughts within and to conversations without. But if you largelyignore both in order to concentrate on it, it will return to you.

100. Unless the-words of prayer penetrate to the soul's depths no tears will moisten your cheeks.

101. Com will spring up for the fanner who has hidden seed in the earth; tears will flow for the monk whodiligently attends to the words of prayer.

102. The key to the kingdom of heaven is prayer. He who uses this key as he should sees what blessings thekingdom holds in store for those who love it. He who has no communion with the kingdom gives his attentionmerely to worldly matters.

103. The intellect cannot say boldly to God at the time of prayer: 'Thou hast burst my bonds asunder; I will offerto Thee the sacrifice of praise' (Ps. 116:16-17. LXX), unless out of a desire for higher things it frees itself fromcowardice, indolence, excessive sleep and gluttony, all of which lead it to sin.

104. He who is distracted during prayer stands outside the first veil. He who undistractedly offers the single-phrased Jesus Prayer is within the veil. But he alone has glimpsed the holy of holies who, with his natural thoughtsat rest, contemplates that which transcends every intellect, and who has in this way been granted to some extent avision of the divine light.

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105. Whenever the soul, paying no attention to external things, is concentrated in prayer, then a kind of flamesurrounds it, as fire surrounds iron, and makes it wholly incandescent. The soul remains the same, but can no longerbe touched, just as red-hot iron cannot be touched by the hand.

106. Blessed is he who in this life is granted the experience of this state and who sees his body, which by nature isof clay, become incandescent through grace.

107. To beginners the law of prayer is burdensome, like a despotic master; but to the more advanced it is like anerotic force, impelling those smitten by it as a hungry man is impelled towards a rich banquet.

108. To those who genuinely practice the virtues, prayer is sometimes like an overshadowing cloud (cf. Exod.13:21) that keeps off inflammatory thoughts; at other times, bedewing them as it were with tears, it grants themspiritual visions.

109. The music of the lute sounds sweet to the outer ear; but a soul in which during prayer there is no sound ofmystical invocation in the Spirit has not attained true compunction. It is only when 'we do not know how to pray aswe should, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us' (Rom. 8:26), that we are brought to this state ofcompunction.

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Exalted as it reads these textsThe intellect is radiant with spiritual contemplation.

1. The man of spiritual knowledge must recognize when his intellect is in the realm of intellection, when it is inthat of thought, and when in that of sense-perception. And in each case he must recognize whether it is there at theright time or at the wrong time.

2. When the intellect is not in the realm of intellection, it is generally in that of thought. And when it is in therealm of thought, it is not in that of intellection. But when it is in the realm of sense-perception, it is associated withall manner of visible and material things.

3. By means of intellection the intellect attains spiritual realities; through thought the reason grasps what isrational. Sense-perception is involved with practical and material realities by means of the fantasy.

4. When the intellect is self-concentrated, it contemplates neither the objects of sense-perception nor those of therational faculty; on the contrary, it contemplates pure intellects and the rays of divine light flowing with peace and

joy.

5. The intellection of an object is one thing, the rational apprehension of that object is another, and the objectperceived is a third. The first constitutes the essence, the second is an attribute of the essence, and the thirdcomprises the distinctive subject matter.

6. Given free rein, the intellect is insatiable. But when it is confined to one path - that of prayer - and has not yetreached its goal, it feels cramped, and implores its partner to let it enjoy the things from which it has been withheld.

7. When the intellect has been drawn down from the realm above.

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it will not return thither unless it is completely detached from worldly things through concentration on things divine.

8. If you cannot make your soul dwell only on thoughts kindred to it, at least keep your body to itself, and reflectcontinually upon the wretchedness to which it is subject. For thus, by God's mercy, you will in time be able to returnto your original nobility.

9. The man engaged in ascetic practice can readily submit his intellect to prayer, while the contemplative canreadily submit prayer to the intellect. The first restricts his perception of visible forms, while the second directs hissoul's attention towards the inner essences concealed in such forms. Alternatively, the first compels the intellect toapprehend the inner essences of corporeal realities, while the second persuades it to grasp those of incorporealbeings. The inner essences of corporeal realities are also incorporeal, with respect both to their specific qualities andto their essential being.

10. When you free your intellect from self-indulgence in the body, in food and possessions, then whatever you dowill be regarded by God as a pure offering. In exchange, the eyes of your heart will be opened, and you will be ableclearly to meditate on the divine principles inscribed within it; and their sweetness to your spiritual taste will begreater than that of honey.

11. You will not be able to make your intellect rise above physical and material things, and even above the desirefor necessary food, until you introduce it into the pure realm of the righteous. Then mmdfulness of death and of Godwill fill the earthy heart and cleanse it of all profligate desire.

12. There is nothing more fearful than the thought of death, or more wonderful than remembrance of God. For thefirst induces the grief that leads us to salvation, and the second bestows gladness. 'I remembered God,' says theprophet, 'and I rejoiced' (Ps. 77:3. LXX). And Sirach says: 'Be mindful of your death and you will not sin' (Ecclus.7:36). You cannot possess the remembrance of God until you have experienced the astrmgency of the thought ofdeath.

13. Until the intellect has seen God's glory with 'unveiled face' (2 Cor. 3:18), the soul cannot say from experienceof that glory: 'I shall exult in the Lord, I shall delight in His salvation' (cf. Ps. 35:9. LXX). For its heart is stillshrouded in self-love, so that the world's foundations - the inner essences of things - cannot be re-

vealed to it. And it will not be free from this shroud until it has undergone both

voluntary and involuntary sufferings.

14. The leader of the people of Israel first must flee from Egypt (the actual committing of sin), next must crossover the Red Sea (servitude through attachment), and thirdly must dwell in the desert - the desert lying between theimpulses to sin and the outward fulfillment of these impulses. Only then, sending ahead his visual and visionaryforce, can he spy out the promised land - dispassion (cf Josh. 2:1).

15. Those who dwell in the desert - those who abstain from the actual committing of evil - possess the blessings of

the promised land only by hearsay. Those who have spied out these blessings with the soul's perception haveattained the contemplation of visible things. But those who have been privileged actually to enter the promised landfeed in full consciousness on the milk and honey that flows within it (cf. Exod. 3:8) - that is to say, on the inneressences of both corporeal and incorporeal realities.

16. A man still subject to physical impulses has not yet been crucified with Christ (cf. Gal. 2:20), and if he stilldrags natural thoughts along with him he has not yet been buried with Him. How then can he be raised up withChrist, to live in newness of life?

17. The three most comprehensive virtues of the soul are prayer, silence and fasting. Thus you should refreshyourself with the contemplation of created realities when you relax from prayer; with conversation about the life ofvirtue when you relax from silence; and with such food as is permitted when you relax from fasting.

18. So long as the intellect dwells among divine realities, it preserves its likeness to God, being filled withgoodness and compassion. When it descends to the realm of things perceived by the senses - provided its descenthas been opportune and apt - it can give and receive experience and then, strengthened by this, it can return to itself.But when its descent has been inopportune and unnecessary, it acts like an inept general who fails to use most of hisfighting force.

19. The paradise of dispassion hidden within us is an image of that in which the righteous will dwell. None theless, not all who fail to enter the first will be excluded from the second.

20. The rays of the visible sun cannot penetrate a shuttered house. Nor will the rays of the spiritual sun penetratethe soul unless its senses are closed to visible things.

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21. The man of spiritual knowledge is one who descends from the realm of intellection to that of sense-perceptionin a sublime manner and who raises his soul heavenwards with humility.

22. Traversing the fields a bee gathers the ingredients for honey; traversing the ages the soul infuses sweetnessinto the mind.

23. A deer that has eaten a snake rashes to water in order to neutralize the poison; but a soul wounded by thearrows of God drinks deep draughts of ceaseless longmg for her assailant.

24. Unimpassioned thoughts arise in one living in a state of self-unity; reasoned calculations in one living in astate of self-division. But when all thoughts have been expelled from the fragmented soul, only incorporeal intellectscommune with it, revealing to it the principles of providence and judgment that constitute the foundations of theworld.

25. One living in a state of self-division cannot avoid the distinction between male and female; but this may bedone by one living in a state of self-unity, when the distinction between male and female is suppressed throughattaining the divine likeness in Christ Jesus (cf. Gal. 5:28).

26. Thoughts pertain neither to the non-rational aspect of the soul (for they do not occur in non-rational animals),nor to its intellectual aspect (since they are not to be found in angels). Being products of the reason, they use theimagination as a ladder, and so ascend from the world of the senses to the intellect, conveying to the latter theobservations which they have derived from sense-perception; then they redescend from the intellect down to theworld of the senses, communicating to it the intellect's principles.

27. When the ship of smfulness is overwhelmed by the flood of tears, evil thoughts will react like peopledrowning in the waves and trying to grasp hold of something so as to keep afloat.

28. Thoughts gather about the soul according to its underlying quality: either they are like pirates and try to sink it,or they are like oarsmen and try to help it when it is in danger. The first tow it out into the open sea of sinfulthoughts; the second steer it back to the nearest calm shore they can find.

29. Unless the soul strips itself of the thoughts that lead up to self-esteem - which is the worst of the seven evilthoughts - it will not be able to strip off this seventh thought either; and so it will not be able to clothe itself in theeighth thought, called by St Paul 'our house

that is from heaven'. Only those who have divested themselves of material things are able 'with heartfelt sighs' toclothe themselves in this eighth thought (cf. 2 Cor. 5:2-4).

30. Angelic thoughts accompany perfect prayer; spiritual thoughts, intermediate prayer; and thoughts aboutnature, the prayer of beginners.

31. The quality of the grain is usually evident in the ear of com; similarly, the purity of contemplation is usuallyevident in prayer. The grain is surrounded by a spear-like sheath in order to prevent the birds from eating it;contemplation is armed with spiritual thoughts through which to destroy the temptations that attack it.

32. Through the practice of the virtues the outward aspects of the soul become like the silver-coated wings of adove. Through contemplation its inward and intelligible aspects become golden. But the soul that has not in this wayregained its beauty cannot soar aloft and come to rest in the abode of the blessed.

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Part IV

Here is a meadow full of the fruitsOf spiritual practice and contemplation.

33. In olden times men were instructed to offer in the temple the firstfruits of the threshing-floor and the wine-press (of. Num. 18:12). Likewise we ought now to offer God self-control and truth as the firstfruits of asceticpractice, and love and prayer as the firstfruits of the virtue of contemplation. Through the first we repulse theassaults of mindless desire and anger; through the second we vanquish empty thoughts and the snares into whichthey lead us.

34. The first stage of ascetic practice is marked by self-control and truthfulness; the intermediate stage bymoderation and humblemindedness; the final stage by freedom from thoughts and the sanctification of the body.

35. Ascetic practice consists not merely in managing to do what is right, but also in doing it rightly: the doer mustconcern himself with timeliness and congruity.

36. To contemplate is to perceive not only the existing state of corporeal realities but also the ultimate goal oftheir inner principles.

37. Ascetic practice cannot be consolidated without contemplation, and contemplation cannot be genuine withoutascetic practice. For practice must be based on intelligence, and contemplation on practice. In this way evil will bepowerless to disrupt practice, and contemplation will be prolific in acts of goodness.

38. The goal of ascetic practice is the mortification of the passions; of spiritual knowledge, the contemplation ofthe virtues.

39. Ascetic practice is to contemplation as matter is to form; and contemplation is to ascetic practice as the eye isto the face.

40. Many compete for practical virtue, but only one receives the[V3] 53

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prize: he who seeks to attain its goal through contemplation.

41. The man engaged in ascetic practice drinks the draught of compunction during prayer, but the contemplativegets drunk with the best cup (cf. Ps. 23:5. LXX). The first meditates on things that are according to nature, while thesecond ignores even himself during prayer.

42. The man engaged in ascetic practice cannot persist in spiritual contemplation for long. He is like a person whois being given hospitality but must shortly leave his host's house.

43. When praying, men engaged in ascetic practice are as it were entering the gate of God's commandments; butcontemplatives when praising God stand as though in the courts of the virtues. The first give thanks because theyhave been freed of their fetters, the second because they have also taken captive those who waged war against them.

44. You must be governed by both ascetic practice and contemplation. Otherwise you will be like a ship voyagingwithout the right sails: either it risks being overturned by the violence of the winds because its sails are too large, orit fails to take advantage of the breeze because they are too small.

45. By the oarsmen of the spiritual ship understand devout thoughts. By oars understand the vital powers of thesoul: the incensive and the desiring powers, and the will and free choice. The man engaged in ascetic practice isalways in need of these, whereas the contemplative does not always need them. For during prayer the contemplativebids farewell to everything: himself holding the tiller of discernment he keeps awake throughout the night ofcontemplation, offering praises to Him who holds all things together. And perhaps he sings some love song to hissoul as he watches the swell of the salty sea and the tumult of the waves, and marvels at the righteous judgments ofGod.

46. The person at a stage intermediate between ascetic practice and contemplation does not make the voyageentirely by means of oars, nor entirely by means of spiritual sails, but with the aid of both. Because he possesses ameasure of contemplation, he gladly endures the hardships of ascetic practice; and because he is assisted by asceticpractice, he equally accepts the reasons for the shortcomings of his contemplation.

47. The contemplative, with his will assisted by nature as though by a current,

voyages without difficulty. But theman engaged in

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ascetic practice, finding his resolution undermined by his attachment to sensible things, is much troubled by thewaves of his thoughts; indeed, he almost falls into despair because of their violence.

48. Land that is not well tilled is unlikely to yield a good crop of clean grain; and unless the man engaged inascetic practice proceeds diligently and without ostentation, he will not enjoy a bountiful harvest of good clean fruitas the result of his prayer.

49. The mind engaged in the unremitting practice of prayer is like well-trodden earth: such earth will be smoothand welcoming to tender feet, while the mind will then be untarnished and receptive to pure prayer.

50. In relation to material things, the intellect is assisted by thought; but in relation to immaterial things, thought,unless repudiated, will be like 'a thorn in the flesh' (2 Cor. 12:7) to the intellect.

51. The man engaged in ascetic practice finds that during prayer the knowledge of sensible things covers his heartlike a veil, which he is unable to remove because of his attachment to these things. Only the contemplative man,owing to his non-attachment, can to some degree see the glory of God 'with unveiled face' (2 Cor. 3:18).

52. Prayer combined with spiritual contemplation constitutes the promised land in which there flows, like 'milkand honey' (Exod. 3:8), the spiritual knowledge of the principles of God's providence and judgment. Prayer

combined with a certain measure of natural contemplation is Egypt, in which those who pray still encounter thememory of their grosser desires. Simple prayer is manna in the desert (cf Num. 11:7). Since it is unvarying, thismanna does not disclose to the impatient the promised blessings for which they long; but for those who perseverewith such restricted food, it imparts most excellent and

abiding nourishment.

53. Ascetic practice combined with contemplation is like the body united to its ruling spirit. Withoutcontemplation, it is like flesh dominated by a spirit of self-will.

54. Sense-perception is the forecourt of the deiform soul; the reason is her temple; and the intellect, her highpriest. The intellect is to be found in the forecourt when held captive by inept thoughts; in the temple whencircumscribed by thoughts that are apposite. When it is free from both, it is privileged to enter the holy sanctuary.

55. There is a sound of grief and lamentation in the house of the[V3] 55

soul still at the stage of ascetic practice, because of the suffering it endures; but in the house of the contemplativesoul 'a voice of exultation and thanksgiving' (cf Ps. 42:4. LXX) is heard, because of its spiritual knowledge.

56. On account of his sufferings, the man engaged in ascetic practice wants to leave this life and to be with Christ;the contemplative, on the contrary, is quite content to remain in the flesh, both because of the joy that he receivesfrom prayer, and because of the use that he can be to his fellow-men (cf. Phil. 1:23-24).

57. Where people of greater intelligence are concerned, contemplation precedes ascetic practice, whereas in thecase of the more obtuse, ascetic practice precedes contemplation. Both contemplation and ascetic practice lead to thesame auspicious conclusion; but this is attained more quickly by those in whom contemplation precedes asceticpractice.

58. Paradise is the contemplation of intelligible realities. During prayer the man of spiritual understanding entersinto it as into his own home; but the man engaged in ascetic practice is like a passer-by: he wants to look in, but isprevented by the wall of his spiritual immaturity.

59. Bodily passions are like wild animals, while passions of the soul are like

birds. The man engaged in asceticpractice can keep the animals out of the noetic vineyard; but unless he enters into a state of spiritual contemplation,he cannot keep the birds away, however much he strives to guard himself inwardly.

60. The man engaged in ascetic practice cannot rise above ethical propriety, unless he goes beyond the naturallaw-as Abraham went forth from his own land-and beyond his own limited state of development-as Abraham left hiskinsmen (cf. Gen. 12:1). In this way, as a mark of God's approval, he will be liberated from the all-embracing holdof pleasure; for it is this veil of pleasure, wrapped around us from our birth, that prevents us from receivingcomplete freedom.

61. When spring comes, a colt cannot bear being confined to the stable and feeding out of the manger. Similarly,the newly-initiated intellect cannot long bear being confined to prayer: like the colt, it would gladly go out into thefields of natural contemplation, there to devote itself to psalmody and spiritual reading.

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62. Ascetic practice girds the soul's vital powers with fasting and vigil, while contemplative virtue keep thespiritual powers burning like lamps by means of silence and prayer. The vital powers have the reason as their tutor,the spiritual powers have the indwelling Logos as their bridal escort.

63. The uninitiated intellect is not permitted to enter the ripe vineyard of prayer. It is given access only - andbarely - to the literal repetition of the psalms, as a poor man is allowed to glean the small grapes left on the vines.

64. Just as not all those who have audience with a king can also dine with him, so not all those who have attaineda certain familiarity with prayer will rise to contemplation during it.

65. Apt silence bridles anger; moderation in food bridles mindless desire; and the single-phrased Jesus Prayerbridles unruly thought.

66. The man who dives into the sea for pearls will fail in his efforts unless he first strips off his clothes; similarly,the man who plunges into the sea of spiritual

knowledge in search of the pearl of wisdom will fail to find it unless hestrips himself of his attachment to the world of the senses.

67. The intellect that encloses itself within the mind during prayer is like a bridegroom conversing with the brideinside the bridal chamber. But the intellect that is not allowed to enter stands dejectedly outside, crying:' "Who willlead me into the walled city'?" (Ps. 60:9). Who will guide me until I no longer see vanities and delusions duringprayer'?'

68. As food without salt is to the taste, so is prayer without compunction to the intellect.

69. The soul still in pursuit of prayer is like a woman in the pains of childbirth; but the soul that has attainedprayer is like a woman who has given birth and is full of joy on account of her child.

70. In olden times the Amorites used to come down from the mountain and attack those trying to force their waythrough (cf Deut. 1:44). In our days evil forgetfulness repulses those who, before attaining purity, attempt to rise tohigher form-free prayer.

71. The demons are extremely hostile to pure prayer. Moreover, it is not the host of psalms that can terrify them,as an army might terriiy an external enemy; it is the alliance of the intellect with the reason and of the reason withsense-perception.

72. Prayer free from passion is like sustaining bread to those who[V3] 57

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pray; prayer combined with some degree of contemplation is like nourishing oil; and prayer that is free of forms islike sweet-smelling wine. Those who drink deeply of this wine are rapt out of themselves.

73. It is said of the wild ass that it scorns the crowds in the city, and of the unicorn that it cannot be fettered byanyone (cf Job 39:7-9). Similarly, the intellect, having mastered thoughts both natural and contrary to nature, mockstheir vanity, and during prayer cannot be dominated by any of the objects

of sense-perception.

74. Shaking a stick at dogs provokes their fury; forcing oneseh" to pray in purity provokes the fury of the demons.

75. The spiritual aspirant must restrain his senses through frugality and his intellect through the single-phrasedJesus Prayer. Having in this way detached himself from the passions, he will find himself caught up to the Lordduring prayer.

76. Those who indulge their passions, being materially-minded, are distracted during prayer by their thoughts asby frogs. Those who restrain their passions are gladdened during prayer by the changing forms of contemplation,which are like nightingales moving from one branch to another. But in the dispassionate there is silence and greatquiescence of both thought and intellection during prayer.

77. In olden times, when Miriam, the sister of Moses, saw the fall of the enemy, she took up a timbrel and led thewomen who sang the victory-songs (cf. Exod. 15:20-21). In our days, when the soul overcomes the passions, love -the highest of the virtues - rises up to praise it. As though taking up the lyre, it embarks upon the contemplation thatlong ago has been appointed for it as a hard-won addition to its beauty; and it ceaselessly glorifies God, rejoicingwith its sister-virtues.

78. When through continuous prayer the words of the psalms are brought down into the heart, then the heart likegood soil begins to produce by itself various (lowers: roses, the vision of incorporeal realities; lilies, the luminosityof corporeal realities; and violets, the many judgments of God, hard to understand.

79. A flame gives light so long as it is wedded to matter. But the ' soul becomes God's shrine only when free frommatter. The flame rises up so long as it has something to bum on; the soul is raised upward until it is consummatedin divine love.

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80. A soul that has denied itself completely, and has been raised above creation wholly to the realm of prayer,does not descend whenever it wishes: it descends when He who weighs and measures all our affairs judges it to beright.

81. When listlessness is expelled from the soul, and malice from the mind, then the intellect, naked in simplicity,innocent and totally stripped of the veil of shame, sings a new song to God, with joyful gratitude celebrating theforefeast and inauguration of the life to come.

82. When the soul that prays begins to respond to the higher divine realities, then, like the bride in the Song ofSongs, it sings to its companions: 'My Beloved stretched His hand through the opening, and my womb trembledbecause of Him' (Song of Songs 5:4).

83. As a soldier returning from war unburdens himself of his arms, so the man engaged in ascetic practiceunburdens himself of thoughts when he attains to contemplation. For as the first has no need of arms except in timeof war, so the second has no need of thoughts unless he reverts to the things apprehended by the senses.

84. The man engaged in ascetic practice sees corporeal realities in terms of their relations; the contemplative seesthem in terms of their nature. Only the spiritually illumined grasps the inner principles of what the other two

perceive.

85. Incorporeal realities may be apprehended in the logoi or inner principles of corporeal realities; but inincorporeal realities may be apprehended the supraessential Logos to whom every diligent soul urgently strives toreturn.

86. The inner principles of corporeal realities are concealed like bones within objects apprehended by the senses:no one who has not transcended attachment to sensible things can see them.

87. A soldier casts off his arms when he has ceased fighting; the contemplative casts off thoughts when he returnsto the Lord.

88. A general becomes despondent when he fails to capture any booty in war; so does the mm engaged in asceticpractice when he fails to attain spiritual contemplation in prayer.

89. When bitten by some wild animal, a deer runs swiftly to earthly springs of water; a soul wounded by the mosttender arrow of prayer hastens towards the light of incorporeal realities.

90. Just as the eye cannot see a grain of wheat unless the eyelids are open, so the practical intellect cannot see itsown nature unless stripped of the attachment to sensible things that obscures its vision.

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91. The stars are hidden when the sun rises, and thoughts vanish when the intellect returns to its own realm.

92. When the stage of ascetic practice has been fulfilled, spiritual visions flood the intellect like the sun's rayscoming over the horizon; even though they are native to it, and embrace it because of its purity, they appear to comefrom outside.

93. If on descending from the realm of vision to attend to practical matters the contemplative intellect were tospeak of what it has experienced, it would say such things as: 'What is more wondrous than divine beauty, or morelovely than the sense of God's magnificence? What longing is so keen and unbearable as that engendered by God ina soul purified of every vice and truly able to say: "I am wounded with love"?' (Song of Songs 2:5. LXX).

94. 'My heart grew warm within me and a fire was kindled during my meditation' (Ps. 39:3. LXX). So may speakthe man who has no difficulty in following God through prayer and who has no desire for temporal life.

95. When it has rejected evil, let the soul still engaged in ascetic struggle repeat the words of the Song to themalicious demons and thoughts that forcibly try to turn its attention once more to vanities and delusion: 'I have takenoff my coat; how can I put it on again? I have washed my feet; how can I make them dirty?' (Song of Songs 5:3).

96. The soul that enjoys God's love is bold enough to say to Him: Tell me. Good

Shepherd, where You grazeYour Sheep, and where You rest Your lambs at noon, so that by following them I may avoid becoming like oneencircled by the flocks of Your companions' (cf. Song of Songs 1:7. LXX).

97. The soul still engaged in ascetic struggle, trying to hold fast to the words of prayer and not being able to do so.

cries out like the soul in the Song: 'By night on my bed 1 sought Him whom I love; I sought Him but I did not findHim; I called Him, but He did not listen to me. I will rise now through more strenuous prayer and will go about thecity, in the wide streets and the market-places, and will look for my Beloved. Perhaps I shall find Him who ispresent in all things and beyond all things; and I will feast on the vision of His glory' (cf. Song of Songs 3:1-2.LXX).

98. When the soul begins to be all tears from the joy that accompanies prayer, it grows bold and, like a bride toher bridegroom, cries: 'Let my Beloved come down mto His garden, and let Him feed on

the hard-won consolation of my tears as though on choice fruit' (cf Song of Songs 5:1. LXX).

99. When the soul still engaged in ascetic struggle begins to be struck with wonder at the Creator because of themagnificence and beauty of created things, and to savor the delight that comes from them, it too cries inastonishment: 'How beautiful You are, my Bridegroom, paradise of Your Father: You are a flower of the field and acedar of His, like the cedars of Lebanon. I yearned for His shadow, and I sat down, and His fruit was sweet in mymouth' (cf Song of Songs 2:1-3. LXX).

100. If someone who receives a king in his house becomes in this way illustrious, admired of all and full of joy,how much more so will the soul that, when purified, receives the King of kings, according to His unfailing promise? But it must guard itself with great care, casting out everything that does not seem to please Him, and introducingeverything that does.

101. If a person is expecting to be summoned tomorrow by the king, will he have any concern other than toconsider what he will say in order to please the king? A soul that takes careful note of this will not be foundunprepared when it comes before the future judgment seat.

102. Blessed is the soul that, because it expects its Lord daily, thinks nothing of the day's toil or of the night's,since He is going to appear in the morning.

103. God sees all men, but only those see God who perceive nothing during prayer. God listens to those who seeHim, while those to whom He does not listen do not see Him. Blessed is the man who believes that he is seen byGod; for his foot will not slip (cf. Ps. 73:2) unless this is God's will.

104. The blessings of the kingdom within us-which the world-loving eye has not seen, and the presumptuous earhas not heard, and which have not entered into a heart empty of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 2:9) - are a pledge andforetaste of the blessings to be given by God to the righteous in the kingdom that is to come. If we do not savor thefirst, which are the fruits of the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:22), we will not be able to enjoy the second.

105. The thoughts of those engaged in ascetic practice are like deer. Deer sometimes go up into the mountainsbecause they are frightened of hunters, and sometimes down to the valleys because they want

what they can find there. Similarly those engaged in ascetic practice can neither be constantly in a state of spiritualcontemplation, for they are still immature, nor be constantly in a state of natural contemplation, for they do notalways seek relaxation. The thoughts of contemplatives, however, disdain inferior forms of contemplation.

106. Raindrops moisten the furrows, and tear-laden sighs rising from tile heart soften the soul's state duringprayer.

107. No one can contemplate the Triune Divinity unless his vision transcends the

material dyad as well as thematerial monad; and he will not transcend the latter unless he has integrated the intellections of his intellect.

108. It is less hard to check the downward flow of a river than for one who prays to check the turbulence of theintellect when he wishes, preventing it from fragmenting itself among visible things and concentrating it on thehigher realities kindred to it. This is so in spite of the fact that to check the flow of a river is contrary to nature, whileto check the turbulence of the intellect accords with nature.

109. Those who inwardly purify the intellect by ignoring what is visible are filled with such wonder and such joythat they would not be able to find room for anything earthly, even though they were to be flooded with all thethings over which people fight.

110. Simply to speak of the laws of nature is enough to arouse deep admiration. But when they are fullyunderstood, they are as fields full of flowers, whose lavish blossoms give out a spiritual sweetness like nectar fromheaven.

111. Bees surround their queen among fresh meadow-flowers; and the soul that is unceasingly in a state ofcompunction is surrounded and assisted by the angelic powers, for it is kindred to them.

112. Within the visible world, man is as it were a second world; and the same is true of thought within theintelligible world. For man is the herald of heaven and earth, and of all that is in them; while thought interprets theintellect and sense-perception, and all that pertains to them. Without man and thought both the sensible and theintelligible worlds would be inarticulate.

113. A person released from long captivity is not so full of joy as the intellect freed from its attachment to sensiblethings and winging its way towards the heavenly realm that is its native land.

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114. A person who prays, not with attention, but distractedly, will regard the

psalms as uncouth; and from thepoint of view of the psalms he will appear equally uncouth. Both will be considered mad by the demons.

115. Those to whom the world is crucified are not the same as those who are crucified to the world (cf Gal. 6:14).For the first, the nails are fasting and vigils; for the second, they are to shed every possession and to be treated with

contempt. Without the second, the sufferings involved in the first are useless.

116. No one can pray purely if he is constrained by the passions of ostentation and ambition. For the attachmentsand frivolous thoughts in which these passions involve him will twine around him like ropes, and during prayer willdrag his intellect down like a fettered bird that is trying to fly.

117. The intellect cannot be peaceful during prayer unless it has acquired self-control and love. With God's helpthe first strives to put an end to the body's hostility towards the soul, the second to our hostility towards our fellow-men. Upon the man who has in this way established peace within himself, 'the peace that surpasses the intellect'(Phil. 4:7) then descends and, according to God's promise, takes up its abode in him.

118. The person struggling to enter the kingdom of God must excel in works of righteousness: in almsgiving, byproviding out of his own paucity; and in suffering for the sake of peace, by responding to trials with patientendurance in the Lord.

119. Neither one who falls short of virtue because of negligence nor one who out of presumption oversteps it willreach the harbor of dispassion. Indeed, no one will enjoy the blessings of righteousness who tries to attain them bymeans of either deficiency or excess.

120. Land cannot make a farmer wealthy merely by yielding the equivalent to the grain which he has sown, oreven by adding to it slightly; it can do so only by multiplying it. Similarly, the achievements of one engaged inascetic practice cannot make him righteous unless his diligence towards God exceeds his natural propensity.

121. Not everyone who does not love his neighbor actually hates him, and not everyone who does not hate hisneighbor is able to love him. It is one thing to envy one's neighbor's progress, and another to refrain from hinderingit. The

height of malice consists not simply in

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being galled at one's neighbor's superiority, but also in traducing his good qualities by saying that they are not goodat aU.

122. Bodily passions are one thing, passions of the soul another. Passions according to nature are other than thosewhich are contrary to nature. The person who repulses the former, but does not take account of the latter, is like aman who sets up a high thick fence to keep wild animals out, but wishes joy to the birds eating the finest grapes inhis spiritual vineyard.

123. First the soul imagines evil, then desires it, then feels pleasure or pain with respect to it, then becomes fullyconscious of it, and finally unites with it either outwardly or inwardly. Thoughts accompany all these phases, exceptthat of the initial stimulus. If this is repudiated, none of the evil that follows will be actualized.

124. Those who are approaching dispassion will be troubled only by fantasies; those who restrain their passions,by desires; those who indulge their passions, by entanglements. Those who misuse what they have to meet theirneeds, but feel remorse for it, are conscious of the evil they do; those who feel no remorse unite with evil.

125. Pleasure has its seat in every part of the body, but does not disturb everyone in the same way. In somepeople, it disturbs more the desiring aspect of the soul; in others, the mcensive aspect; and in others, the intelligence.It does this through gluttony, bad temper and malice, the source of all the unholy passions.

126. Like the gates of a city, we have to open the organs of sense-perception in order to satisfy essential needs;but in so doing we must take care not to give access at the same time to warlike tribes that seek to attack us.

127. Pleasure is the mother of desire; bad temper, of anger; malice, of jealousy. Whoever does not struggle againstthe ringleaders will not be left in peace by

their subordinates; nor can you restrain the passions if you practice thecommandments only because you are forced to do so.

128. Those who repulse provocations prevent thoughts from entering the spiritual vineyard like maraudinganimals and ruining it. Those who couple with provocations, but do not take pleasure in them, simply allow theanimals to enter, though not to touch any of the things inside. Those who enjoyably commune with the passionsthrough thoughts, yet do not reach the point of giving assent to them, are like men who, after allowing a wild boar tocome through the

fence into the vineyard, have stopped him from taking his fill of the grapes but then have found him more than theycan control. Such people often end by giving assent to the passions.

129. If you still have to give thought to the exercising of self-control you have not yet attained simplicity. Onlyone engaged in ascetic struggle, it is said, has to exercise self-control (cf 1 Cor. 9:25), not one who is spirituallyperfect. A person engaged in ascetic struggle is like a man who has a vineyard or corn-land not among othervineyards or other farms, but somewhere out on its own, and which for this reason needs much guarding andwatching. No one, however, touches the vineyard of the person who has attained simplicity: it is like that of a kingor some other awesome potentate, whose very name is enough to make thieves and passers-by shudder at thethought of trying to enter it.

130. Many ascend the cross of mortification, but few consent to be nailed to it. For many submit to hardships andafflictions of their own choosing; but only those who have died completely to this world and to the respite it offersreadily submit to the sufferings that come against their will.

131. Many have removed all their 'coats of skin' (Gen. 3:21) except the last, that of self-esteem. This is cast offonly by those who are disgusted with what produces it: their own self-satisfaction.

132. The person who is offered bodily comfort and men's praise, but refuses to

accept them, has been stripped ofthe final coat, that of self-esteem. To him is granted the grace of being clothed, even in this present life, with thesplendor of the heavenly dwelling-place, longed for with so many sighs.

133. The energy or capacity for an action is one thing, and the action or thing energized is another. A sin actuallycommitted is an example of the second, while some form of self-indulgence that is activated only inwardly, notoutwardly, is an example of the first. Someone dominated by such self-indulgence is like a person who, although notturned out of his own property, yet has to pay tribute to others who control what he holds dear.

134. When the sense of taste is the chief purveyor of pleasure, the other senses are bound to follow in its wake.This is so even if the reproductive organs of those who are less hot-blooded, such as the elderly, appear to beunmoved and free from excitement because they have dried up. Yet the sterile woman who commits adultery willnot

be judged chaste from the fact that she does not produce children. We would say that only the person free frompassion within, and not seduced by what he sees, is entirely chaste.

135. The state of the desiring aspect of the soul is revealed through food, gestures and speech; through whatappeals and what does not appeal; through taste, sight and hearing, both by the use it' makes of them and by the wayit misuses them, and even by the neutral attitude it adopts towards them.

136. Where fear does not lead the way, thoughts will be in a state of confusion, like sheep that have no shepherd.Where fear leads the way or goes with them, they will be under control and in good order within the fold.

137. Fear is the son of faith and the shepherd of the commandments. He who is without faith will not be foundworthy to be a sheep of the Lord's pasture.

138. Some possess only the rudiments of spiritual qualities, some possess them

partially, while others possessthem in a complete form. The first are like an ordinary soldier, the second like an officer without any money: thesoldier can barely defend his home from those who try to damage it, while the officer is not treated with due respectwhen he meets others.

139. Those who exhort us, imperfect as we are, to indulge the pleasures of the palate, act like people whoencourage us to reopen wounds that are healed, or to scratch an itch because of the enjoyment it gives, or to eatfoods which increase fever, or to fence off our spiritual vineyard but to allow the impulses of the flesh to enter like awild boar and devour our good thoughts like grapes. We must not give way to them; nor must we yield to theimportunate flattery of men and passions. Rather, we must strengthen the fence through self-control, until the wildanimals - the carnal passions - stop their howling, and vain thoughts no longer descend like birds and despoil thevineyard of our soul, rich as it is with the contemplative vision bestowed on it by our Lord Jesus Christ. To Him beglory throughout the ages. Amen.

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Theophanis the Monk

(Tohime 3, pp. 66-69)

Introductory Note

In the Greek Philokalia this poem appears without any introductoiy note, and nothing is known concerning its author. He lays

particular emphasis upon the need for direct personal experience. Eternal life, he also insists, has to begin here and now, in thispresent world; but at the same time, like St Gregory of Nyssa, he sees perfection as an endless progress in the age to come, 'astep that has no limif.

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Which experience has made Icnown to those inspired by God

The first step is that of purest prayer.

From this there comes a warmth of heart.

And then a strange, a holy energy.

Then tears wrung from the heart, God-given.

Then peace from thoughts of every kind.

From this arises purging of the intellect.

And next the vision of heavenly mysteries.

Unheard-of light is bom from this ineffably.

And thence, beyond all telling, the heart's illumination.

Last comes - a step that has no limit

Though compassed in a single line -

Perfection that is endless.

The ladder's lowest step

Prescribes pure prayer alone.

But prayer has many forms:

My discourse would be long

Were I now to speak of them:

And, friend, know that always

Experience teaches one, not words.

A ladder rising wondrously to heaven's vault:

Ten steps that strangely vivify the soul.

Ten steps that herald the soul's life.

A saint inspired by God has said:

Do not deceive yourself with idle hopes

That in the world to come you will find life

If you have not tried to find it m this present world

Ten steps: a wisdom bom of God.

Ten steps: fruit of all the books.

Ten steps that point towards perfection.

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Theophanis the MonkThe Ladder of Divine Graces

Ten steps that lead one up to heaven.

Ten steps through which a man knows God.

The ladder may seem short indeed.

But if your heart can inwardly experience it

You will find a wealth the world cannot contain,

A god-like fountain flowing with unheard-of life.

This ten-graced ladder is the best of masters.

Clearly teaching each to know its stages.

If when you behold it

You think you stand securely on it.

Ask yourself on which step you stand.

So that we, the indolent, may also profit.

My friend, if you .want to learn about all this.

Detach yourself from everything.

From what is senseless, from what seems intelligent.

Without detachment nothing can be learnt.

Experience alone can teach these things, not talk.

Even if these words once said

By one of God's elect-strike harshly,

I repeat them, to remind you:

He who has no foothold on this ladder.

Who does not ponder always on these thmgs.

When he comes to die will know

Terrible fear, terrible dread.

Will be full of boundless panic.

My lines end on a note of terror.

Yet it is good that this is so:

Those who are hard of heart - myself the first -

Are led to repentance, led to a holy life.

Less by the lure of blessings promised

Than by fearful warnings that inspire dread.

'He who has ears to hear, let him hear.'

You who have written this, hear, then, and take note:

Void of all these graces.

How have you dared to write such thmgs?

How do you not shudder to expound them?

Have you not heard what Uzzah suffered

When he tried to stop God's ark from falling?

[V3] 69

Theophanis the Monk

The Ladder of Divine Graces

Do not think that I speak as one who teaches:I speak as one whose words condemn himself.Knowing the rewards awaiting those who strive.Knowing my utter fruitlessness.

[V3] 70

St Peter of Damaskos

(?12th Century)(Volumes, pp. 70-281)

Introductory Note

The works of St Peter of Damaskos occupy more space in the Philokalia than those of any other author, with theone exception of St Maximos the Confessor. Of the author's life and identity nothing definite is known apart fromthe information to be gleaned from his own writings. St Nikodimos identifies him with a certain Bishop Peter theHieromartyr, commemorated on 9 February, who suffered in defence of the holy ikons around the middle of theeighth century: his tongue, so it is recounted, was cut out at the orders of the Arab ruler Walid, and he died in exilein southern Arabia. The Peter whose works are included in the Philokalia, however, must be several centuries laterthan this, since he refers by

name to Symeon Metaphrastis the Logothete, who died in the late tenth century.' But,although often quoting from earlier authors, Peter nowhere cites eleventh-century writers such as St Symeon theNew Theologian or Nikitas Stithatos. A thirteenth-century manuscript of his works dates him to 1096-7, andanother of the fourteenth century to 1156-7." It seems, then, that he belongs to the eleventh or more probably to thetwelfth century; he is in any event definitely earlier than the fourteenth-century Hesychast controversy. Although helived at a time of worsening relations between Orthodoxy and Rome, he never alludes to this.

From his name it appears St Peter's family was connected with Damaskos, but it does not necessarily follow thatPeter himself was bom or lived there. He is evidently a monk, writing for other monks. He speaks of the three maintypes of monasticism - 'bodily obedience' in a fully organized community, the hermit life, and the intermediate orsemi-eremitic path, with two or three monks pursuing a 'life of silence' together in a hellion - and, following St JohnKlimakos, he

See below, [V3] p. 103; on Symeon Metaphrastis, see also, [V3] p. 283.^SeeJ

See J. Gouillard, 'Un auteur spirituel byzantin du XII"^ siecle. Pierre Damascene', iic/ioi d'Orent xxxviii (1939), pp. 257-78.

commends above all the third of these forms, terming it the 'royal way'. Perhaps, then, this was the form of monasticismwhich he himself was following. The content of his work confirms this: he says little about the social or communal aspects ofthe monastic vocation, little about visitors, hospitality or liturgical services. He is concerned throughout with the personalascesis and prayer of the individual hesychast; and yet he does not envisage the situation of one who is entirely solitaiy, for heoften mentions 'the brethren'.

St Peter himself explains how his work came to be written. 'Devout friends, who also cater for my physical needs',lent him Biblical and Patristic books (had he been living in a fully organized community, the monastery would havemet his physical needs, and he would have been able to borrow books from the monastic library). As he read, henoted down passages that caught his attention, in the first instance for his personal use, as a safeguard against hisown forgetfulness." He also added connecting comments of his own, writing quickly, almost

automatically, and - ashe tells us - not knowing what he was going to say before he put pen to paper.^ The resulting book, he believes, isbased entirely on Scripture and the fathers: 'what is said here ... is not mine'." He adds that he has sometimes,although by no means invariably, identified his sources by name, so as to encourage his readers to look up the authorfor themselves.' Of the sources named, the most frequent are St Basil the Great and St John Chrysostom, eachmentioned 47 times; next come St John Klimakos (38 times), St Isaac of Nineveh ('the Syrian', 34 times), theGerontikon or Sayings of the Desert Fathers (about 30 times), St John of Damaskos (28 times), and St Gregory ofNazianzos (23 times). There are fewer references to St Maximos the Confessor (19) and to Neilos/Evagrios (15), butPeter's work as a whole clearly stands in the Evagrian-Maximian tradition. Dionysios is cited only nine times, theMakarian Homilies no more than three times, and St Mark the Ascetic and St John Cassian only twice each. Thereare nine references to St Dorotheos of Gaza, but none to St Isaiah of Sketis/Gaza or to St Varsanuphios. ProbablyPeter had not consulted the original works of all the authors whom he cites, but relied at any rate in part on existinganthologies. We have tried to identify the more obvious of

' See [V3] p. 87.

'[V3]pp. 74, 102-3, 182-3.'pp. 211-12.■•p. 193.'p. 193.

his quotations, but have not attempted to provide exhaustive references; some of the aUusions are very vague, andprobably he does not always have a precise passage in mind. Where there is good reason to believe that a particularascription is wrong, and the true author can be identified, we have changed the text accordingly.

As might be expected from the manner of composition, St Peter's work is not systematic. Although he makes useof various general schemes - the four cardinal virtues, the eight evil thoughts, the seven bodily actions, the eightstages of contemplation - there are constant digressions, repetitions and changes of theme. Book Two, with itsTwenty-Four Discourses corresponding to the twenty-four letters of the Greek alphabet, possesses a more coherentstructure than Book One; but even in Book Two, especially towards the end, there is often no clear

sequence ofthought. Chapter headings sometimes refer only to the opening sentence or paragraph of the section, while the restdeals with other matters.' But this outward lack of order would not greatly have troubled St Peter's monasticreaders, who were interested not in abstract systems but in practical advice; and this the author has undoubtedlyprovided. Drawing as it does on such a wide range of earlier authorities, the work constitutes, in St Nikodimos'words, 'a recapitulation of holy watchfulness ... a circle within a circle, a concentrated Philokalia within the moreextended Philokalia'.

In his spiritual teaching St Peter is balanced and moderate. Although writing for monks, he insists that salvationand spiritual knowledge are within the reach of everyone; continual prayer is possible in all situations withoutexception." While emphasizing the need for ascetic effort on the human side, he never underestimates the supremeimportance of divine aid: all that we have is a gift of God's grace. Tears, compunction and inward grief are oftenmentioned, especially in the first three of the eight stages of contemplation; but the predominant note is one ofhope, and he has much to say about the universal scope of God's love and the sovereign liberty of the human will.

In common with many of his predecessors, St Peter is reserved about dreams and visions. He prefers, likeEvagrios, to recommend imageless prayer - 'pure' prayer of the intellect, on a level above

' In our translation chapter headings are sometimes abbreviated or modified,'pp. 83-4, 173, 193.

discursive thought. At the same time, however, he follows St Mark the Ascetic' in advocating a vivid anddetailed meditation upon the incarnate life and more particularly the Passion of Christ; imageless prayer andimaginative meditation are in fact mentioned side by side in the ninth of the Twenty-FourDiscourses. ' Whileurging the repetition of the words 'Lord, have mercy',' he nowhere refers specifically to the Jesus Prayer. Onfrequent occasions he draws attention to the need for spiritual direction. In these and many other ways St Peter ofDamaskos proves a faithful guide upon the spiritual way: as St Nikodimos justly claims, his work is a 'treasury ofdivine knowledge and wisdom'."

' Letter to Nicolas the Solitary (The PhilokaUa, vol. i, pp. 155-6)'pp. 234-6.'pp. 145, 199.

* We have bon'owed Nikodimos' phrase to provide a title for Book One, which in the original Greek is simply styled 'The Book of our Holyand God-bearing Father Peter of Damaskos'.

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St Peter of DamaskosBookl

A Treasury of Divine KnowledgeIntroduction

Because by God's grace I have been granted many great gifts and yet have never done anything good myself, Ibecame frightened lest in my laziness and sloth I would forget His blessings - as well as my own faults and sins -and not even offer Him thanks or show my gratitude in any way. I have therefore written this treatise as a rebuke tomy unhappy soul, putting in it whatever I have come across from the lives and writings of the holy fathers, citingthem by name, so that I might have it by me as a reminder of their words, even though it is incomplete.

As I myself neither own nor ever have owned any books, I have borrowed them from devout friends, who alsocater for my physical needs; and going through these books with great care out of love for God, I have then giventhem back to their owners. These books include first of all the Old and the New Testaments,

that is, the Pentateuch,the Psalter, the Four Books of Kings, the Six Books of Wisdom, the Prophets, the Chronicles, the Acts of theApostles, the Holy Gospels and the commentaries on all these; and then all the writings of the great fathers andteachers-Dionysios, Athanasios, Basil, Gregory the Theologian, John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nyssa, Antony,Arsenios, Makarios, Neilos, Ephrem, Isaac, Mark, John of Damaskos, John Klimakos, Maximos, Dorotheos,Philimon, as well as the lives and sayings of all the saints.

I went through all these slowly and diligently, trying to discover the root of man's destruction and salvation, andwhich of his actions or practices does or does not bring him to salvation. I wanted to find what it is that everyoneseeks after, and how people served God in the past, and still serve Him today, in wealth or poverty, living among

many sinners or in solitude, married or celibate: how, quite simply, in every circumstance and activity we find life ordeath, salvation or

destruction. Even among us monks there are different situations: obedience to a spiritual father in all matterspertaining to body or soul; the stillness that purifies the soul; spiritual counsel in the place of obedience; the officesof abbot and bishop. In each of these situations, some find salvation and others perish.

This in itself astonished me; but I was astonished also by the fall of that erstwhile angel in heaven, immaterial bynature, clothed with wisdom and every virtue, who suddenly became a devil, darkness and ignorance, the beginningand end of all evil and malice. And, then there was Adam, who enjoyed such honor and so many blessings, suchfamiliarity with God, who was adorned with wisdom and virtue, alone in paradise with Eve: he suddenly became anexile, filled with passions, mortal, forced to labour with sweat and affliction. From him sprang the only two brothersin the world, Cain and Abel; and between them jealousy triumphed, and deceit, and these gave rise to murder,cursing and terror. I was astonished, too, by their descendants, whose sins were so many that they provoked theflood; and then, after God in His compassion had saved those in the ark, one of them - Canaan - was cursed,although it was his father Ham who had

sinned: for in order not to abrogate God's blessing, righteous Noah cursedthe son instead of the father (cf. Gen. 9 : 22-27). Then there were the tower of Babel, the people of Sodom, theIsraelites, Solomon, the Ninevites, Gehazi, Judas, and all those who were endowed with blessings and yet turned tosin.

I was also astonished how God, who is good beyond all goodness and mil of compassion, permits all the manyand various trials and afflictions of the world. Some He allows as sufferings conducive to repentance. These includehunger, thirst, grief, privation of life's needs, abstinence from pleasure, the wasting of the body through asceticism,vigils, labors, hardships, prolific bitter tears, anguish, fear of death, of cross-examination, of being called to account,of living in hell with demons, the appalling day of judgment, the ignominy that is to fall on the whole world, theterror, the bitter searching out and assessment of one's acts, words and thoughts, the threats and the wrath; and inaddition to these, the various agelong punishments, the useless lamenting and the ceaseless tears; the unrelieveddarkness, the fear, the pain, the exile, the dismay, the oppression, the throttling of the soul in this world and in thenext. And then there are all the dangers facing one in this world: shipwrecks, illnesses of every kind.

lightning, thunder, hail, earthquake, famine, tidal waves, untimely deaths-all the painful things that God allows tohappen to us against our will.

Other things are willed not by God but by ourselves or by the demons. These include battles, passions, the wholerange of sins from folly to despair and final destruction, of which our treatise will speak as it goes on; the attack ofdemons, wars, the tyranny of the passions; the derelictions, dislocations and vicissitudes of life; the anger, slanderand all the affliction that we of our own will bring upon ourselves and one another against God's will. Again I wasastonished how, though beset by such evils, many have been saved, and that nothing has been able to prevent this.On the other hand, many have perished against God's will.

When from my laborious study of the Scriptures I became aware of all these things, and many more, my soul wasshattered and often I felt quite helpless, like spilt water. I did not fully grasp the significance of what I read; indeed,had I

done so, 1 would not have been able to remain in this life, filled as it is with sin and disobedience to God,which produce all the evils of this world and the next. Nevertheless, through God's grace, I came Upon the answers Isought for, and saw, from my reading of the holy fathers, that we have to make certain distinctions.

First, we must recognize that the starting-point of all our spiritual development is the natural knowledge given usby God, whether this comes through the Scriptures by human agency, or by means of the angel that is given indivine baptism to guard the soul of every believer, to act as his conscience and to remind him of the divinecommandments of Christ. If the baptized person keeps these commandments, the grace of the Holy Spirit ispreserved in him.

Then, alongside this knowledge, there is our capacity to choose. This is the beginning of our salvation; by our freechoice we abandon our own wishes and thoughts and do what God wishes and thinks. If we succeed in doing this,there is no object, no activity or place in the whole of creation that can prevent us from becoming what God from thebeginning has wished us to be: that is to say, according to His image and likeness, gods by adoption through grace,dispassionate, just, good and wise, whether we are rich or poor, married or unmarried, in authority and free or underobedience and in bondage - in short, whatever our time, place or activity. That is why,

alike before the Law, under the Law and under grace, there have been many righteous men-men who preferred theknowledge of God and His will to their own thoughts and wishes. Yet there were also many who have perished inthese same times and in the same circumstances, because they preferred their own thoughts and wishes to those ofGod.

This, then, is the general picture. But situations and pursuits vary, and one needs to acquire discrimination, eitherthrough the humility given by God or through questioning those who possess the gifts of discrimination. For withoutdiscrimination nothing that comes to pass is good, even if we in our ignorance think that it is. But when throughdiscrimination we learn how it lies in

our power to attain what we wish, then what we do begins to conform to God'swill.

Only, as has been said, in all things we ought to renounce our own will so as to attain the goal God has set for usand to pursue whatever He wishes. Unless we do this we can never be saved. For since Adam's transgression we areall subject to the passions because of our constant association with them. We do not gladly pursue goodness, nor dowe long for the knowledge of God, nor do we do good out of love, as the dispassionate do; instead we cling to ourpassions and our vices and do not aspire at all to do what is good unless constrained by the fear of punishment. Andthis is the case with those who receive God's word with firm faith and purpose. The rest of us do not even aspire tothis extent, but we regard the afflictions of this life and the punishments to come as of no account and arewholeheartedly enslaved to our passions. Some of us do not even perceive our desperate plight, and only underconstraint and reluctantly engage in the struggle for virtue. And in our ignorance we long for what merits our hatred.

Just as sick people need surgery and cautery to recover the health they have lost, so we need trials, and toils ofrepentance, and fear of death and punishment, so that we may regain our former health of soul and shake off thesickness which our folly has induced. The more the Physician of our souls bestows upon us voluntary andinvoluntary suffering, the more we should thank Him for His compassion and accept the suffering joyfully: For it isto help us that He increases our tribulation, both through the sufferings we willingly embrace in our repentance andthrough the trials and punishments not subject to our will. In this way, if we voluntarily accept affliction, we will befreed

from our sickness and from the punishments to come, and perhaps even from present punishments as well. Even ifwe are not grateful, our Physician in His grace will still heal us, although by means of chastisement and manifoldtrials. But if we cling to our disease and persist in it, we will deservedly bring upon ourselves agelong punishment.We will have made ourselves like the demons and so will justly share with them the agelong punishments preparedfor them; for,

like them, we will have scorned our Benefactor.

We do not all receive blessmgs in the same way. Some, on receiving the fire of the Lord, that is. His word, put itinto practice and so become softer of heart, like wax, while others through laziness become harder than clay andaltogether stone-like. And no one compels us to receive these blessings in different ways. It is as with the sun whoserays illumine all the world: the person who wants to see it can do so, while the person who does not want to see it isnot forced to, so that he alone is to blame for his lightless condition. For God made both the sun and man's eyes, buthow man uses them depends on himself. Similarly, then, God irradiates knowledge to all and at the same time Hegives us faith as an eye through which we can perceive it.

If we choose to grasp this knowledge firmly by means of faith, we can keep ourselves mindful of it by putting itinto practice; and God then gives us greater ardor, knowledge and power. For our pursuit of natural knowledgekindles our ardor, and this ardor increases our capacity to put the knowledge into practice. By putting it into practicewe keep ourselves mindful of it, and this in its turn induces us to practice it to an even greater extent. Greater

practice is rewarded by greater knowledge; and from the understanding thus acquired we gain control of the passionsand learn how to endure our sufferings patiently. Sufferings produce devotion to God and a recognition of His giftsand our faults. These give birth to gratitude, and gratitude inculcates the fear of God which leads us to the keeping ofthe commandments, to inward grief, gentleness and humility. These three virtues produce discrimination, whichgives us spiritual insight and makes it possible for the intellect in its purity to foresee coming faults and to forestallthem through its experience and'^ recollection of what has happened in the past; in this way it can protect itselfagainst stealthy attacks. All this generates hope, and from hope come detachment and perfect love.

Once we have advanced thus far we shall not wish for anything except the will of God; rather we will joyfullyabandon this transitory life out of love for God and for our fellow-men. Through the wisdom and indwelling of theHoly Spirit

and through adoption to sonship, we are crucified with Christ and buried with Him, and we rise withHim and ascend with Him spiritually by imitating His way of life in this world. To speak simply, we become godsby adoption through grace, receiving the pledge of eternal blessedness, as St Gregory the Theologian says. In thisway, with regard to the eight evil thoughts, we become dispassionate, just, good and wise, having God withinourselves - as Christ Himself has told us (cf John 14:21-23) -through the keeping of the commandments in order,from the first to the last. I will speak below about how the commandments should be practiced.

Since we have spoken of the knowledge of the virtues, we will also speak about the passions. Knowledge comeslike light from the sun. The foolish man through lack of faith or laziness deliberately closes his eyes - that is, hisfaculty of choice - and at once consigns the knowledge to oblivion because in his indolence he fails to put it intopractice. For folly leads to indolence, and this in turn begets inertia and hence forgetfulness. Forgetfulness breedsself-love - the love of one's own will and thoughts - which is equivalent to the love of pleasure and praise. Fromself-love comes avarice, the root of all evils (cf. 1 Tim. 6:10), for it entangles us in worldly concerns and in this wayleads to complete unawareness of God's gifts and of our own faults. It is now that the eight ruling passions take upresidence: gluttony, which leads to unchastity, which breeds avarice, which gives rise to anger when we fail to attainwhat we want - that is, fail to have our own way. This produces dejection, and dejection engenders first listlessnessand then self-esteem; and self-esteem leads to pride. From these eight passions come every evil, passion and sin.Those consumed by them are led to despair and utter destruction; they fall away from God and become like thedemons, as has already been said.

Man stands at the crossroads between righteousness and sin, and chooses whichever path he wishes. But after thatthe path which he has chosen to follow, and the guides assigned to it, whether angels and saints or demons andsinners, will lead him to the end of it, even

if he has no wish to go there. The good guides lead him toward God and the kingdom of heaven, the evil guidestoward the devil and agelong punishment. But nothing and no one is to blame for his destruction except his own freewill. For God is the God of salvation, bestowing on us, along with being and well-being, the knowledge and strengththat we cannot have without the grace of God. Not even the devil can destroy a man, compelling him to choosewrongly, or reducing him to impotence or enforced ignorance, or anything else: he can only suggest evil to him.

Thus he who acts rightly should ascribe the grace of so doing to God, for along with our being He has given useverything else. But the person who has opted for the path of evil, and actually commits evil, should blame onlyhimself, for no one can force him to commit it, since God created him with free will. Hence he will merit God'spraise when he chooses the path of goodness; for he does so, not from any necessity of his nature, as is the case withanimals and inanimate things that participate passively in goodness, but as befits a being that God has honored withthe gift of intelligence. We ourselves deliberately and willfully choose to do evil, being coached in it by itsdiscoverer. God, who is good beyond goodness, does not force us, lest being forced and still disobeying we shouldbe even more culpable. Nor does He take from us the freedom that in His goodness He has bestowed upon us.

Let him who wants to act rightly entreat God in prayer, and at once knowledge and power will be given him. Inthis way it will be evident that the grace bestowed by God was justly given; for it was given after prayer, although itcould have been given without prayer. No praise, however, is due to the man who accepts the air by means of whichhe lives, knowing that without it life is impossible; rather he himself owes thanks to his Creator, who has given hima nose and the health to breathe and live. Similarly, we also should rather thank God because in His grace He hascreated our prayer, our knowledge, our strength, our virtue, all our circumstances and our very selves. And not onlyhas He done all this, but He ceaselessly does whatever He can to overcome our wickedness and that of our enemies,the demons.

Even the devil, having lost the knowledge of God, and so inevitably becoming ignorant in his ingratitude andpride, cannot of himself know what to do. On the contrary, he sees what God does to save us

and maliciously learns from this and contrives similar things for our destruction. For he hates God and, being unableto fight Him directly, he fights against us who are in God's image, thinking to avenge himself on God in this way;and, as St John Chrysostom says, he finds us obedient to his will. For instance, he sees how God created Eve as ahelpmate for Adam, and so he enlists her co-operation to bring about disobedience and transgression. Or, again, Godgave a commandment so that by keeping it Adam might be mindful of the great gifts he had received and thank hisBenefactor for them; but the devil made of this commandment the starting-point for disobedience and death. Instead

of prophets, he promotes false prophets; instead of apostles, false apostles; instead of law, lawlessness; instead ofvirtues, vice; instead of commandments, transgressions; instead of righteousness, foul heresies.

In addition, when the devil saw Christ descending in His extreme goodness to the holy martyrs and reveredfathers, appearing either in Himself or through angels or in some other ineffable form, he began to fabricatenumerous delusions in order to destroy people. It is on account of this that the fathers, in their discrimination, wrotethat one should not pay any attention to such diabolic manifestations, whether they come through images, or light, orfire, or some other deceptive form.' For the devil can deceive even in sleep or through the senses. If we accept suchdelusions, he makes the intellect, in its utter ignorance and self-conceit, depict various shapes or colors so that wethink that this is a manifestation of God or of an angel. Often in sleep, or to our senses when awake, he shows usdemons that are apparently defeated. In short, he does all he can to destroy us by making us succumb to thesedelusions.

In spite of all this, the devil will fail in his purpose if we apply the counsel of the holy fathers: that during the timeof prayer we should keep our intellect free from form, shape, and colour, and not give access to anything at all,whether light, fire or anything else; and that we should do all we can to confine our mind solely to the words we aresaying, since he who prays only with his mouth prays to the wind and not to God. For, unlike men, God is attentiveto the intellect and not to

the words spoken. We must worship, it is said, 'in spirit and in

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truth" (John 4:24); and again, "I had rather speak five words whose meaning I understand than ten thousand words ina strange tongue" (1 Cor. 14:19).

It is now that the devil, having failed in all his other schemes, tempts us with thoughts of despair: he tries topersuade us that in the past things were different and that the men through whom God performed wonders for thestrengthening of the faith were not like us. He also tells us that there is now no need for such exertion. For are wenot now all of us Christians and all baptized? "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved" (Mark 16:16). Whatmore do we need? But if we succumb to this temptation and remain as we are, we will be completely barren. Wewill be Christians only in name, not realizing that he who has believed and been baptized must keep all Christ'scommandments; and even when he has succeeded in doing this, he should say, "I am a useless servant" (Luke17:10), as the Lord told His apostles when He instructed them to carry out all He had laid down for them.

Everyone who is baptized renounces the devil, saying, 'I renounce Satan and all his works, and I join myself toChrist and all His works." But where is our renunciation, if we do not abandon every passion and desist from everysinful act that the devil promotes? Rather, let us hate such things with all our soul and show our love for Christthrough the keeping of His commandments. And how shall we keep His commandments unless we relinquish ourown will and thought - the will and thought, that is to say, which are opposed to the commandments of God?

There are often people who because of personal temperament or out of habit do in fact choose what is good incertain situations and hate what is evil. And there are also good thoughts, as the Scriptures attest, although theyrequire the discrimination of those who possess experience; for without discrimination even those thoughts thatseem good are not in fact good, either because they come at the wrong time, or are unnecessary, or unworthy, or are

not properly understood. For unless both the questioner and he who is questioned are attentive not only to theScriptures but also to the question raised, they will miss the meaning of what has been said, and the resultingdamage will be serious. I myself have often found this, both when asking and when being asked; and whenafterwards I have understood the true sense of the passage under discussion, I have been

amazed to learn how the words can be the same, but the meaning very different.

Thus we need discrimination in all things if we are to know how to act so as to do the will of God. For God, as thecreator of all things, knows our nature thoroughly and has ordered- all things for our benefit; and He has laid downlaws that accord with our nature and are not alien to it, even though they are not capable of leading to perfectionthose who voluntarily aspire to attain God in a way that transcends nature. For that requires the more than naturalqualities of virginity, deliberate poverty, humility - not of gratitude, for this is natural. Humility is more than natural,since the humble man pursues every virtue and, though not a debtor, he regards himself as the greatest debtor of all.The grateful person, on the other hand, will simply acknowledge the debt he owes. Similarly, the merciful man whoperforms his acts of charity by drawing on his possessions remains within the bounds of nature, and does not gobeyond them as does the person who deliberately gives away all he possesses. Again, marriage is natural, whilevirginity is a more than natural grace. The person who remains within the bounds of nature is saved if he abandonshis own will and fulfils that of God; but to the person who transcends these bounds God will give the crown ofendurance and glory, because he has renounced not only what is forbidden by the law but also, with God's help, hisown nature. He loves the supranatural God with all his soul and imitates His dispassion with all his strength.

Yet since we are ignorant not merely of ourselves and of what we do, but also of the purpose of what is done andof the true goal of everything, the divine Scriptures and the words of the saints, whether prophets and righteous menof old or more recent holy fathers, appear to us to be contradictory. Those who wish to

be saved appear to disagreewith one another. But in reality this is not the case.

Briefly, we may say that in the nature of things, if someone wants to be saved, no person and no time, place oroccupation can prevent him. He must not, however, act contrary to the objective that he has in view, but must withdiscrimination refer every thought to the divine purpose. Things do not happen out of necessity: they depend uponthe person through whom they happen. We do not sin against our will, but we first assent to an evil thought and sofall into captivity. Then the thought itself carries the captive forcibly and

against his wishes into sin. The same is true of sins that occur through ignorance: they arise from sins consciouslycommitted. For unless a man is drunk with either wine or desire, he is not unaware of what he is doing; but suchdrunkenness obscures the intellect and so it falls, and dies as a result. Yet that death has not come aboutinexplicably: it has been unwittingly induced by the drunkenness to which we consciously assented. We will findmany instances, especially in our thoughts, where we fall from what is within our control to what is outside it, andfrom what we are consciously aware of to what is unwitting. But because the first appears unimportant andattractive, we slip unintentionally and unawares into the second. Yet if from the start we had wanted to keep thecommandments and to remain as we were when baptized, we would not have fallen into so many sins or haveneeded the trials and tribulations of repentance.

If we so wish, however. God's second gift of grace - repentance - can lead us back to our former beauty. But if wefail to repent, inevitably we will depart with the unrepentant demons into agelong punishment, more by our own freechoice than against our will. Yet God did not create us for wrath but for salvation (cf 1 Thess. 5:9), so that we mightenjoy His blessings; and we should therefore be thankful and grateful towards our Benefactor. But our failure to getto know His gifts has made us indolent, and indolence has made us forgetful, with the result that ignorance lords itover us.

We have to make strenuous efforts when we first try to return to where we fell from. For we resent abandoningour own desires, and we think that we can cany out both God's wishes and our own - which is impossible. Our LordHimself said, 'I have come to do, not My own will, but the will of the Father who sent Me' (cf. John 6:38), eventhough the will of Father, Son and Holy Spirit is one, since they constitute a single inseparable nature. But He saidthis on our account and with respect to the will of the flesh. For if the flesh is not consumed and if a man is notwholly led by the Spirit of God, he will not do the will of God unless he is forced to. But when the grace of theSpirit rules within him, then he no longer has a will of his own, but whatever he does is according to God's will.Then he is at peace. Men like that will be called sons of God (cf. Matt. 5:9), because they will the will of theirFather, as did the Son of God who is also God.

Yet it is impossible to discover the will of God unless we keep the commandments, thereby cutting off allpleasure or personal will, and

unless we endure all the pain that this involves. As has been said, pleasure and pain are bom of folly, and they giverise to all evil. For the foolish man loves himself and cannot love his brother or God; he can neither refrain frompleasure or from the desires that give him satisfaction, nor can he endure pain. Sometimes .he gets what he wants,and then he is filled with pleasure and elation; sometimes he does not get it and, completely dominated by the painwhich this engenders, he is cast down and dejected, experiencing a foretaste of hell.

From knowledge, or understanding, is bom self-control and patient endurance. For the man of understandingrestrains his own will and endures the resulting pain; and, regarding himself as unworthy of anything pleasant, he isgrateful and thankful to his Benefactor, fearing lest because of the many blessings that God has given him in this

world he should suffer punishment in the world to come. Thus through self-control he practices the other virtues aswell. He looks on himself as in God's debt for everything, finding nothing whatsoever with which to repay to hisBenefactor, and even thinking that his virtues simply increase his debt. For he

receives and has nothing to give. Heonly asks that he may be allowed to offer thanks to God. Yet even the fact that God accepts his thanks puts him, sohe thinks, into still greater debt. But he continues to give thanks, ever doing what is good and reckoning himself anever greater debtor, in his humility considering himself lower than all men, delighting in God his Benefactor andtrembling even as he rejoices (cf. Ps. 2:11).

As he advances through this humility towards divine and unfailing love, he accepts sufferings as though hedeserved them. Indeed, he thinks he deserves more suffering than he encounters; and he is glad that he has beengranted some affliction in this world, since through it he may be spared a portion of the punishments which he hasprepared for himself in the world to be. And because in all this he knows his own weakness, and that he should notexult, and because he has been found worthy of knowing and enduring these things by the grace of God, he is filledwith a strong longing for God.

Humility is bom of spiritual knowledge, and such knowledge is bom of trials and temptations. To the person whoknows himself is given knowledge of alt things, and he who subjects himself to God

brings every material thought under his control; and then all things are subject to him, for he is completely humble.According to St Basil and St Gregory, he who knows himself-who knows, that is to say, that he stands midwaybetween nobility and baseness, in that he has a soul capable of spiritual knowledge and a mortal, earthly body-neverexults or despairs. Rather, with a feeling of shame before his noetic soul he rejects everything shameful and,knowing his weakness, he shrinks from all sense of elation.

Thus he who knows his own weakness as a result of the many temptations and trials that he undergoes through thepassions of soul and body, understands the measureless power of God and how He redeems the humble who cry outto Him through persistent prayer from the depths of their hearts. For such a person

prayer becomes a delight. Heknows that without God he can do nothing (cf. John 15:5), and in his fear lest he fall he strives to cleave to God andis amazed as he considers how God has rescued him from so many temptations and passions. He gives thanks to hisSavior, and to his thanksgiving he adds humility and love; and he does not dare to judge anyone, knowing that asGod has helped him, so He can help all men when He wishes, as St Maximos says. He knows, too, that if a personrealizes his weakness he may be able to fight and conquer many passions; for in such a case God swiftly comes tohis assistance, lest his soul be utterly destroyed. And for many other reasons as well the person who recognizes hisown weakness does not fall. No one can attain this recognition unless he first suffers many temptations of soul andbody, and gains experience by enduring them patiently and so overcoming them with God's strength.

Such a man does not dare to act according to his own volition or to depend on his own ideas without firstquestioning those with experience. For what does a person gain by choosing to do or to think something that doesnot contribute to his bodily life or to the salvation of his soul? And if he does not know what wish he shouldabandon and what thought he should put aside, let him test every action and every thought by holding back from itwith self-control and by seeing how that affects him. If its realization brings pleasure, but resisting it brings pain.

then it is something bad and he should reject it before it takes root; otherwise he will find it hard to overcome it[V3] 87

later, when he sees what damage it does. This applies to every action or thought which does not help us to keepourselves alive and to conform to God's will. For a long-standing habit assumes the strength of nature; but if you donot give way to it, it loses strength and is gradually destroyed. Whether a habit is good or bad, time nourishes it, justas wood feeds a fire. Thus, so far as we can, we should cultivate and practice what is good, so that it becomes anestablished habit operating automatically and effortlessly when required. It was through victories in small things thatthe fathers won their great battles.

For if a man refuses to satisfy even the basic needs of the body, but rejects them in order to travel along thestraight and narrow road, how can he ever fall victim

to the love of possessions? Love of possessions consists notmerely in owning many things, but also in attachment to them, or in their misuse or excessive use. For many of thesaints of old, such as Abraham, Job, David and many others, had extensive possessions, but they were not attachedto them: they held them as a gift from God and sought to please Him all the more through their use of them.Nevertheless the Lord, being beyond perfection and being wisdom itself, strikes at the root: for He urges those whowould follow Him through the imitation of supreme virtue to renounce not only material goods or possessions, buteven their own soul (cf. Luke 14:26), that is to say, their own thoughts and will.

Because they knew this, the fathers fled from the world as a hindrance to perfection; and not only from the worldbut also from their own will for the same reason. No one of them ever did what he himself wanted. Some lived inbodily obedience, so that in the place of Christ they would have a spiritual father guiding their every thought.Others, fleeing totally from human society, lived in the desert and had God himself as their teacher, for whose sakethey chose to undergo a voluntary death. Others pursued the "royal way', leading a life of silence with one or twocompanions: these had one another as counselors in doing God's will. And those who, after being subject to aspiritual father, were then appointed by him to take charge of other brethren, carried out their task as if they werethemselves still under obedience, keeping the traditions of their own spiritual fathers. Thus all their efforts wereblessed by God.

Nowadays, however, whether we are under obedience or in authority, we are not wilhng to abandon our own wiU,and so none of us makes any progress. None the less, it is still possible to escape from human society and fromworldly affairs, and to take the 'royal way" through living the life of stillness with one or two others, studying thecommandments of Christ and all the Scriptures day and night. By this means, through being tested in all things byour conscience and application, by reading and by prayer, we may perhaps attain the first commandment, the fear ofGod, which comes through faith and the study of the Holy Scriptures; and through this we may achieve inward grief,and so arrive at

the commandments of which St Paul spoke: faith, hope and love (cf 1 Cor. 13:13). For he who hasfaith in the Lord fears chastisement; and this fear prompts him to keep the commandments. The keeping of thecommandments leads him to endure affliction; and the enduring of affliction produces hope in God. Such hopeseparates the intellect from all material attachment; and the person freed from such attachment possesses love forGod. Whoever follows this sequence will be saved.

Stillness, which is the basis of the soul's purification, makes the observance of the commandments relativelypainless. 'Flee," it has been said, 'keep silence, be still, for herein lie the roots of sinlessness.' Again it has been said:'Flee men and you will be saved." For human society does not permit the intellect to perceive either its own faults orthe wiles of the demons, so as to guard itself against them. Nor, on the other hand, does it allow the intellect toperceive God's providence and bounty, so as to acquire in this way knowledge of God and humility.

That is why whoever wishes to travel the shortest road to Christ - the road of dispassion and spiritual knowledge -and joyfully to attain perfection, should not turn either to the right or to the left, but in his whole way of life shouldjourney diligently along the royal way. He should steer a middle course between excess and insufficiency, as bothengender pleasure. He should not obscure the. intellect with excessive food and conviviality, making himself blindthrough such distractions; but neither should he cloud his mind through prolonged fasts and vigils. Rather, he shouldcarefully and patiently practice the seven forms of bodily discipline as though climbing a ladder.

mastering them once and for all and advancing towards that moral state in which, as the Lord has said (cf. Matt.13:11-12), by God's grace the different stages of spiritual contemplation are given to the believer.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable (cf. 2 Tim. 3:16), and no one can thwart someone who wishes tobe saved. Only God who made us has power over us, and He is ready to help and protect from every temptationthose who cry out to Him and want to do His holy will. Without Him we can do nothing (cf. John

1:12): we cannoteven suffer evil against our will unless God permits it in order to chastise us and save our souls. But the evil that wecommit ourselves is our own responsibility and arises from our own laziness with the help of the demons. On theother hand, all knowledge, strength and virtue are the grace of God, as are all other things. And through grace Hehas given all men the power to become sons of God (cf. John 1:12) by keeping the divine commandments. Or,rather, these commandments keep us, and are the grace of God, since without His grace we cannot keep them. Wehave nothing to offer Him except our faith, our resolution and, in brief, all the true dogmas that we hold with firmfaith through the teaching we have heard (cf. Rom. 10:17). With all this in mind, let us set to work undistractedly, asthough beginning lessons at school, and in this way carefully learn about the seven forms of discipline to which wehave referred.

St Peter of DamaskosBookl

A Treasury of Divine KnowledgeThe Seven Forms of Bodily Discipline

The first of these forms of disciphne consists in stillness, or in living a life without distraction, far from allworldly care. By removing ourselves from human society and distraction, we escape from turmoil and from himwho 'walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8) through idle talk and the worries oflife. Instead, we have but one concern: how to do God's will and to

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prepare our soul so that it is not condemned when we die; and how with complete attention to learn about the snaresof the demons and our own faults which, being more in number than the sands of the sea and like dust in theirfineness, pass unrecognized by most people. Ever mourning, we grieve over human nature but are comforted byGod. For in our gratitude we are encouraged because we have come to see what we could never have hoped toperceive had we lived outside our cell. Having recognized our own weakness and the power of God, we are filledwith fear and hope, so that we neither lapse through ignorance because we are too sure of ourselves nor, when somemisfortune befalls us, fall into despair because we have forgotten God's compassion.

The second form of bodily discipline consists in moderate fasting. We should eat once a day and then not to thepoint of satiety. We should eat one kind of simple and readily accessible food - if possible, the kind of food that wedo not relish particularly. In this way we can overcome gluttony, greed and desire, and live without distraction. Butwe should not refuse any kind of food completely, lest thereby we wrongly reject things that, being created by God,are 'wholly good and beautiful" (Gen. 1:31). Nor should we gulp everything down at once, indulgently and withoutrestraint; but each day we should eat one kind of thing, with self-control. We should use all things for the glory ofGod, and we should not refuse anything on the grounds that it is evil, as the accursed heretics do. We may drinkwine when appropriate: in old age, sickness and cold weather it is most helpful, but must be drunk only in smallquantities. When we are young and in good health, and the weather is warm, water is better, though we should drinkit as little as possible. For thirst is the best of all bodily disciplines.

The third form of discipline consists in keeping moderate vigils. We should sleep for half the night and the otherhalf we should

devote to the recital of psalms and to prayer, compunctive sorrow, and tears. Through this judicious fasting and vigilthe body will become pliable to the soul, healthy and ready for every good work; while the soul will gain in fortitudeand illumination, so as to see and to do what is right.

The fourth form of discipline consists in the recital of psalms - that is to say, in prayer expressed in a bodily waythrough psalms and prostrations. This is in order to gall the body and humble the soul, so that our enemies thedemons may take flight and our allies the angels come to us, and we may know from where we receive help.Otherwise in ignorance we may grow arrogant, thinking that what we do is due to ourselves. If that happens, we willbe forsaken by God so that we may recognize our own weakness.

The fifth form of discipline consists in spiritual prayer, prayer that is offered by the intellect and free from allthoughts. During such prayer the intellect is concentrated within the words spoken and, inexpressibly contrite, itabases itself

before God, asking only that His will may be done in all its pursuits and conceptions. It does not payattention to any thought, shape, color, light, fire, or anything at all of this kind; but, conscious that it is watched byGod and communing with Him alone, it is free from form, color and shape. Such is the pure prayer appropriate forthose still engaged in ascetic practice; for the contemplative there are yet higher forms of prayer.

The sixth form of discipline consists in reading the writings and lives of the fathers, paying no attention to strangedoctrines, or to other people, especially heretics. In this way we learn from the divine Scriptures and from thediscrimination of the fathers how to conquer the passions and acquire the virtues. Our intellects will be filled withthe thoughts of the Holy Spirit, and we will forget the unseemly words and conceptions to which we gave ourattention before we became monks. Moreover, through deep communion in prayer and reading we will be able tograsp precious meanings; for prayer is helped by reading in stillness, and reading is helped by pure prayer, so longas we attend to what is being said and do not read or recite carelessly. It is true, however, that we cannot properlyunderstand the full significance of what we read because of the darkness induced by the passions; our presumptionoften leads us astray, especially when we rely on the wisdom of this world which we think we possess, and do notrealize that we need knowledge based on

experience to understand these things, and that if we wish to attain knowledge of God mere reading or hstening isnot enough. For reading and hstening are one thing and experience is another. One cannot become a craftsmansimply by hearsay: one has to practice, and watch, and make numerous mistakes, and be corrected by those withexperience, so that through long perseverance and by eliminating one's own desires one eventually masters the an.Similarly, spiritual knowledge is not acquired simply through study but is given by God through grace to thehumble. That a person on reading the Scriptures may think that he partially understands their meaning need cause nosurprise, especially if that

person is at the stage of ascetic practice. But he does not possess the knowledge of God;he simply hears the words of those who do possess this knowledge. Writers like the prophets often did indeedpossess divine knowledge, but as yet the ordinary reader does not. So it is in my own case: 1 have collected materialfrom the Holy Scriptures, but have not been found worthy of learning directly from the Holy Spirit; I have learntonly from those who did learn directly from the Holy Spirit. It is like learning about a person or a city from thosewho have actually seen them.

The seventh form of bodily discipline consists in questioning those with experience about all our thoughts andactions, in case we go astray because of our inexperience and self-satisfaction, thinking and doing one thing afteranother, and so become presumptuous, imagining that we know as we should, although we still know nothing, as StPaul says (cf 1 Cor. 8:2).

In addition to practicing these seven bodily disciplines, we should patiently endure all that God allows to happento us so that we may learn and gain experience and knowledge of our weaknesses. We should neither grow too boldnor fall into despair, whatever happens to us, whether good or bad. We should repudiate every dream and every idleword or action, and should always meditate on God's name, at every moment, in every place, in all we do, assomething more precious than breath itself. And we should sincerely abase ourselves before God, withdrawing theintellect from all worldly thoughts, seeking only that God's will may be done. Then the intellect will begin to seethat its faults are like the sand of the sea. This is the beginning of the soul's illumination and a sign of its health: thesoul becomes contrite and the heart humble, and truly regards itself as the

least of things. Then we begin to understand God's blessings, whether particular or all-embracing, of which theHoly Scriptures speak; and we begin to understand also our own offences. We start to keep all the commandments,from the first to the last, fully aware of what we are doing. For the Lord has established them like a ladder, and wecannot miss one out and go on to the next: as with steps, we

must go from the first to the second, from the second tothe third, and so on. In the end they make man a god, through the grace of Him who has given the commandments tothose who choose to keep them.

St Peter of DamaskosBookl

A Treasury of Divine KnowledgeThe Seven Commandments

If we want to make a start, we must concentrate on the practice of these seven forms of bodily disciphne and onnothing else: otherwise we will fall over a precipice or, rather, into chaos. In the case both of the seven gifts of theSpirit and of the Lord's Beatitudes, we are taught that if we do not begin with fear, we can never ascend to the rest.For, as David says, 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 111:10). Another inspired prophetdescribes the seven gifts as "the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit ofknowledge and reverence, the spirit of the fear of God' (cf. Isa. 11:2-3). Our Lord Himself began his teaching byspeaking of fear; for He says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit' (Matt. 5:3), that is, those who quail with fear of Godand are inexpressibly contrite in soul. For the Lord has established this as the basic commandment, knowing thatwithout this even living in heaven would be profitless, for one would still possess the same madness through whichthe devil, Adam and many others have fallen.

If, then, we wish to keep the first commandment - that is, to possess fear of the Lord - we should meditate deeplyupon the contingencies of life already described and upon God's measureless and unfathomable blessings. Weshould consider how much He has done and continues to do for our sake through things visible and invisible,through commandments and dogmas, threats and promises; how He guards, nourishes and provides for us, giving uslife and saving us from enemies seen and unseen; how through the prayers

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and intercessions of His saints He cures the diseases caused by our own disarray; how He is always long-sufferingover our sins, our irreverence, our delinquency- over all those things that we have done, are doing, and will do, fromwhich His

grace has saved us; how He is patient over our actions, words and thoughts that have provoked His anger,and how He not only suffers us, but even -bestows greater blessings on us, acting directly, or through the angels, theScriptures,, through righteous men and prophets, apostles and martyrs, teachers and holy fathers.

Moreover, we should not only recall the sufferings and struggles of the saints and martyrs, but should also reflectwith wonder on the self-abasement of our Lord Jesus Christ, the way He lived in the world. His pure Passion, theCross, His death, burial, resurrection and ascension, the advent of the Holy Spirit, the indescribable miracles that arealways occurring every day, paradise, the crowns of glory, the adoption to sonship that He has accorded us, and allthe things contained in Holy Scripture and so much else. If we bring all this to mind, we will be amazed at God'scompassion, and with trembling will marvel at His forbearance and patience. We will grieve because of what our

nature has lost - angel-like dispassion, paradise and all the blessings which we have forfeited - and because of theevils into which we have fallen: demons, passions and sins. In this way our soul will be filled with contrition,thinking of all the ills that have been caused by our wickedness and the trickery of the demons.

So it is that God grants us the blessing of inward grief, which constitutes the second commandment. For, as Christsays, 'Blessed are those who grieve" (Matt. 5:4) - who grieve for themselves and also, out of love and compassion,for others as well. We become as one who mourns a dead person, because we perceive the terrible consequences thatthe things we have done before our death will have for us after we are dead; and we weep bitterly, from the depthsof our heart and with inexpressible sorrow. Worldly honor or dishonor no longer concerns us; we become indifferentto life itself, often forgetting even to eat because of the pain in our heart and our ceaseless lamentation.

In this way God's grace, our universal mother, will give us gentleness, so that we begin to imitate Christ. Thisconstitutes the third commandment; for the Lord says, 'Blessed are the gentle" (Matt. 5:5). Thus we become like afirmly-rooted rock, unshaken by the

storms and tempests of life, always the same, whether rich or poor, in ease or hardship, in honor or dishonor. Inshort, at every moment and whatever we do we will be aware that all things, whether sweet or bitter, pass away, andthat this life is a path leading to the future life. We will recognize that, whether we like it or not, what happenshappens; to be upset about it is useless, and moreover deprives us of the crown of patience and shows us to be inrevolt against the will of God. For whatever God does is "wholly good and beautiful' (Gen. 1:31), even if we areunaware of this. As the psalm puts it: 'He will teach the gentle how to judge' (Ps. 25: 9. LXX) or, rather, how toexercise discrimination. Then, even if someone gets furious with us, we are not troubled; on the contrary, we areglad to have been given an opportunity to profit and to exercise our understanding, recognizing that we would nothave been tried in this way were there not some cause for it. Unwittingly or wittingly we must have offended God,or a brother, or someone else, and now we are being given a chance to receive forgiveness for this. For throughpatient endurance we may be granted forgiveness for many sins. Moreover, if we do not forgive others their debts,the Father will not forgive us our debts (cf Matt. 6:14). Indeed, nothing leads more swiftly to the forgiveness of sinsthan this virtue or commandment: "Forgive, and you will be forgiven' (cf. Matt. 6:14).

This, then, is what we realize when we imitate Christ, growing gentle through the grace of the commandment. Butwe are distressed for our brother, because it was on account of our sins that this brother was tempted by the commonenemy and so became a remedy for the healing of our weakness. Every trial and temptation is permitted by God as acure for some sick person's soul. Indeed, such trials not only confer on us forgiveness of our past and present sins,but also act as a check on sins not yet committed. But this is not to the credit either of the devil, or of the person whotempts, or of the person tempted. The devil, being maleficent, deserves our hatred, for he acts with no concern forour welfare. The person who tempts us merits our compassion, not because he tempts us out of love but because heis deluded and oppressed. The person tempted, finally, endures affliction because of his own faults, not on behalf ofsomeone else. If the latter were the case, he would deserve praise; but as it is, he is not without sin. Were he withoutsin-which is impossible-he would still endure the affliction in hope of reward and out of fear of

punishment. Such, then, is the situation of these three. But God, being self-sufficient and giving to each what is to hisprofit, does indeed deserve our thanks, since He patiently suffers both the devil and the wickedness of men, and yetbestows His blessings upon those who repent both before and after they sin.

Thus the person who has been granted the grace of keeping the third commandment, and so has acquired fulldiscrimination, will no longer be deceived either wittingly or unwittingly. Instead, having received the grace ofhumility, he will regard himself as nothing. For gentleness is the substance of humility, and humility is the doorleading to dispassion. Through dispassion a man enters into perfect unfaltering love; for he understands his ownnature - what it was before birth and what it will be after death. For mortal man is nothing but a slight, short-livedstench, baser than any other created being. For no created being, animate or inanimate, has ever subverted the will ofGod except man who, although loaded with blessings, endlessly angers God.

That is why man has been given the fourth commandment, that is, longing to acquire the virtues: 'Blessed are theythat hunger and thirst after righteousness' (Matt. 5:6). He becomes as one who hungers and thirsts for allrighteousness, that is, both for bodily virtue and for the moral virtue of the soul. He who has not tasted something,says Basil the Great, does not know what he is missing; but once he has tasted it, he is filled with longing. Thus hewho has tasted the sweetness of the commandments, and realizes that they lead him gradually towards the imitationof Christ, longs to acquire them all, with the result that he often disdains even death for their sake. Glimpsing themysteries of God hidden in the Holy Scriptures, he thirsts to grasp them fully; and the more knowledge he gains, themore he thirsts, burning as though drinking flames. And because the Divine cannot be grasped fully by anyone, hecontinues to thirst for ever.

What health and sickness are to the body, virtue and wickedness are to the soul, and knowledge and ignorance tothe intellect. The greater our devotion to the practice of the virtues, the more our intellect is illumined by knowledge.It is in this way that we are accounted worthy of mercy, that is, through the fifth

commandment: 'Blessed are themerciful, for they will receive mercy" (Matt. 5:7). The merciful person is he who gives to others what he has himself

received from God, whether it be money, or food, or strength, a helpful word, a prayer, or anything else that he hasthrough which he can express his compassion for those in need. At the same time he considers himself a debtor,since he has received more than he is asked to give. By Christ's grace, both in the present world and in the world tocome, before the whole of creation he is called merciful, just as God is called merciful (cf Luke 6:36). Through hisbrother, it is God Himself who has need of him, and in this way God has become his debtor. Although his needybrother can live without him giving what he is asked for, he himself can neither live nor be saved if he does not dowhat he can to show mercy. If he is not willing to show mercy to his own kind, how can he ask God to show mercyto him? Bearing these and many other things in mind, the person to whom it is granted to keep the commandmentsgives not only his possessions but even his very life for his neighbor. This is perfect mercy; for just as Christendured death on our behalf, giving to all an example and a model, so we should die for one another, and not onlyfor our friends, but for our enemies as well, should the occasion call for it.

Not that it is necessary, of course, to have property in order to show mercy. Possessions, rather, are a greatweakness. Indeed, it is better to have nothing to give and still to be full of sympathy for all. And if we do havesomething to give to those in need, we should ourselves be detached from the things of this life, and yet feel deeplyinvolved with our fellow men. Neither should we, in our arrogance, take it upon ourselves to teach others when wehave not yet proved ourselves by our own actions; though we make the excuse that we are thereby helping the soulsof the weak, the truth is that we are ourselves weaker than those we claim to be helping. For every action must bedone at the right time and with discrimination, so that it is not inopportune or detrimental. For a weak person flightis always best, while the total shedding of possessions is far superior to

giving alms.

It is through detachment that one is enabled to fulfill the sixth commandment: 'Blessed are the pure in heart'(Matt. 5:8). The pure in heart are those who have accomplished every virtue reflectively and reverently and havecome to see the true nature of things. In this way they find peace in their thoughts. For, as the seventhcommandment puts it, 'Blessed are the peacemakers' (Matt. 5:9), that is, those who have set soul and body at peaceby subjecting the flesh to the spirit, so

that the flesh no longer rises against the spirit (cf. Gal. 5:17). Instead, the grace of the Holy Spirit reigns in their souland leads it where it will, bestowing the divine knowledge whereby man can endure persecution, vilification andmaltreatment "for righteousness" sake" (Matt. 5:10), rejoicing because his "reward is great in heaven" (Matt. 5:12).

All the Beatitudes make man a god by grace; he becomes gentle, longs for righteousness, is charitable,dispassionate, a peacemaker, and endures every pain with joy out of love for God and for his fellow men. For theBeatitudes are gifts from God and we should thank Him greatly for them and for the rewards promised: the kingdomof heaven in the age to be, spiritual refreshment in this world, the fullness of all God's blessings and mercies. Hismanifestation when we contemplate the hidden mysteries found in the Holy Scriptures and in all created things, and

the great reward in heaven (of. Matt. 5:12). For if we learn while on earth to imitate Christ and receive theblessedness inherent in each commandment, we shall be granted the highest good and the ultimate goal of ourdesire. As the apostle says, God, who dwells in unapproachable light, alone is blessed (cf. 1 Tim. 6:15-16). We, forour part, have the duty of keeping the commandments-or, rather, of being kept by them; but through them God inHis compassion will give to the believer rewards both in this world and in the world to be.

When through blessed inward grief all this has been realized, then the intellect finds relief from the passions; andthrough the many bitter tears that it sheds over

its sins it is reconciled to God. It is crucified with Christ spirituallythrough moral practice, that is, through the keeping of the commandments and the guarding of the five senses, sothat they do not do anything contrary to their nature. Restraining mindless impulses, the intellect begins to curb thepassions of anger and desire that encompass it. Sometimes it assuages tempestuous anger with the gentleness ofdesire; and at other times it calms desire with the severity of anger. Then, coming to itself, the intellect recognizes itsproper dignity - to be master of itself - and is able to see things as they truly are; for its eye, made blind by the devilthrough the tyranny of the passions, is opened. Then man is granted the grace to be buried spiritually with Christ, sothat he is set free from the things of this world and no longer captivated by external beauty. He looks upon gold andsilver and precious stones, and he

knows that like other inanimate things such as wood and rock they are of the earth, and that man, too, is after death abit of dust and mould in the tomb. Regarding all the delectations of this life as nothing, he looks upon their continualalteration with the judgment that comes from spiritual knowledge. Gladly he dies to the world, and the worldbecomes dead to him: he no longer has any violent feeling within him, but only calmness and detachment.

Thus, by virtue of his soul's purity, he is found worthy to be resurrected with Christ spiritually, and receives thestrength to look without passion on the exterior beauty of visible things and to praise through them the Creator of all.Contemplating in these visible things God's power and providence. His goodness and wisdom, as St Paul says (cf.Rom 1: 20-21), and perceiving the mysteries hidden in the divine Scriptures, his intellect is given the grace to ascendwith Christ through the contemplation of intelligible realities, that is, through the knowledge of intelligible powers.Perceiving, after tears of understanding and joy, the invisible through the visible (cf. Rom. 1:20) and the eternalthrough the transitory, he realizes that if this ephemeral world, which is said to be a place of exile and punishmentfor those who have transgressed the

commandments of God, is so beautiful, how much more beautiful must be theeternal, inconceivable blessings "that God has prepared for those who love Him' (1 Cor. 2:9). And if these blessingsare beyond our conception, how much more so must be the God who created all things from nothing.

If you turn from all other activity and give yourself entirely to the cultivation of the virtues of soul and body,which is what the fathers mean by religious devotion; and if you disregard any dream or private thought notconfirmed by Scripture, and avoid all pointless company, not hearing or reading anything fruitless, and especiallyanything that involves heresy, then the tears of joy and understanding will well up copiously within you and you willdrink from their plenitude. In this way you will attain another form of prayer, the form of pure prayer that is properto the contemplative. For just as previously you had one form of reading, one form of tears and prayer, so now youhave another. Since your intellect has moved into the sphere of spiritual contemplation, you should now read all pits

of the Scriptures, no longer fearing the more difficuh and obscure passages, as is the case with those stiU at the stageof ascetic practice, who are weak in their ignorance.

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A Treasury of Divine KnowledgeThe Seven Commandments

By your persistent struggle in practicing the virtues of body and soul, you have been crucified with Christ andburied with Him through the knowledge of created things, both of their nature and of the changes they undergo; andyou have been raised with Him through dispassion and through the knowledge of the mysteries of God inherent inthe visible world. As a result of this knowledge you have ascended with Christ into the transcendent world throughthe knowledge of intelligible realities and of the mysteries hidden in the divine Scriptures. You move from fear toreligious devotion, from which springs spiritual knowledge; from this knowledge comes judgment, that is,discrimination; from discrimination comes the strength -that leads to understanding; from thence you come towisdom.

By passing through all these levels of practice and contemplation you are granted pure and perfect prayer,established within you through the peace and love of God and through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This is whatis meant by saying, 'Gain possession of God within yourself; and, as St John Chrysostom has said, thismanifestation and indwelling of God is realized when your body and soul become so far as is possible sinless, likethose of Christ; and when you possess, by virtue of Christ, an intellect that apprehends, through the grace andwisdom of the Holy Spirit, the knowledge of things both human and divine.

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A Treasury of Divine KnowledgeThe Four Virtues of the Soul

There are four forms of wisdom: first, moral judgment, or the knowledge of what should and should not be done,combined with watchfulness of the intellect; second, self-restraint, whereby our moral purpose is safeguarded andkept free from all acts, thoughts and words that do not accord with God; third, courage, or strength and endurance insufferings, trials and temptations encountered on the spiritual path; and fourth, justice, which consists in maintaininga proper balance between the first three. These four general virtues arise from the three powers of the soul in thefollowing manner: from the intelligence, or intellect, come moral judgment and justice, or discrimination; from thedesiring power comes self-restraint; and from the incensive power comes courage.

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A Treasury of Divine KnowledgeThe Seven Commandments

Each virtue lies between two unnatural passions. Moral judgment lies between craftiness and thoughtlessness;self-restraint, between obduracy and licentiousness; courage, between overbearingness and cowardice; justicebetween over-frugality and greed. The four virtues constitute an image of the heavenly man, while the eightunnatural passions constitute an image of the earthly man (cf. 1 Cor. 15:49).

God possesses a perfect knowledge of all these things, just as He knows the past, the present and the future; andthey are known to some extent by him who through grace has learned from God about His works, and who throughthis grace

has been enabled to realize in himself that which is according to God's image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26).But if someone claims that, simply by hearing about these things, he knows them as he should, he is a liar. Man'sintellect can never rise to heaven without God as a guide; and it cannot speak of what it has not seen, but must firstascend and see it. On the level of hearsay, you should speak only of things that you have learnt from the Scriptures,and then with circumspection, confessing your faith in the Father of the Logos, as St Basil the Great puts it, and notimagining that through hearsay you possess spiritual knowledge; for that is to be worse than ignorant. As StMaximos has said, 'To think that one knows prevents one from advancing in knowledge." St John Chrysostompoints out that there is an ignorance which is praiseworthy: it consists in knowing consciously that one knowsnothing. In addition, there is a form of ignorance that is worse than any other: not to know that one does not know.Similarly, there is a knowledge that is falsely so called, which occurs when, as St Paul says, one thinks that oneknows but does not know (cf. 1 Cor. 8:2).

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A Treasury of Divine KnowledgeActive Spiritual Knowledge

There is such a thing as true spiritual knowledge, and there is total ignorance; but best of all is active spiritualknowledge. For of what use is it to possess all knowledge, or, rather, to receive it from God by grace, as didSolomon (cf. 1 Kgs. 3:12) - and there will never be

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another man like him - and yet go into agelong punishment? What good is such knowledge to you unless, as a resultof your actions and firm faith, your conscience assures you that you are delivered from future punishment, and thatyou have no reason to condemn yourself for neglecting anything you should and could have done? As St John theTheologian says: 'If our heart does not condemn us, then we can approach God with confidence' (1 John 3:21). Butit may be, St Neilos says, that our conscience itself deceives us, overcome by the darkening of the passions, as StJohn Klimakos observes.' For evil can by itself

darken the intellect, as St Basil the Great puts it, and presumptioncan make it blind, not allowing it to become what it supposes itself to be. What, then, shall we say of those who areenslaved to the passions, and yet think they have a clear conscience? Even the Apostle Paul, in whom Christ dweltin word and act, said: "Though I have nothing on my conscience" - no sin, that is to say - "yet I am not therebyacquitted' (1 Cor. 4:4).

Because of our great insensitivity most of us think that we are something while in fact we are nothing (cf. Gal.6:3): as St Paul says, "When they are talking about peace... calamity falls on them" (1 Thess. 5:3). For they did not infact possess peace but, as St John Chrysostom explains, only talked about it, thinking in their great insensitivity thatthey did possess it. Such people, as James the brother of the Lord points out, have forgotten about their sins (cf. Jas.1:24), and most of them in their pride deceive themselves, as St John Klimakos says, into thinking that they aredispassionate.

Indeed, I myself am terrified of those three giants of the devil about whom St Mark the Ascetic has written:laziness, forgetfulness and ignorance. For I am always dominated by them, and I am afraid that in my unawarenessof my own limitations I will stray from the straight path, as St Isaac puts it. It is for this reason that I have compiledthis present collection. The person who hates being rebuked is obviously subject to the passion of pride, St JohnKlimakos says; but the person who puts behind him the fault for which he was rebuked is loosed from his bonds. AsSolomon says, "When a fool enquires about wisdom, he is regarded as wise" (cf. Prov. 17:28. LXX).

I have given the names of books and saints at the beginning, so as not to overburden my work by specifying to.whom each saying belongs. Indeed, the holy fathers often copied out the words of the divine Scriptures just as theyare, as St Gregory the Theologian did with those of Solomon; and Symeon Metaphrastis the Logothete said with

reference to St John Chrysostom that it would be wrong not to use the saint's words and to substitute his own. Andyet he could have done so; for all the

fathers were inspired by the same Holy Spirit. Sometimes they do cite theirauthors, adorning their works with their names, and in their humility preferring the words of the Scriptures to theirown; at other times, because of the great number of citations, they quote anonymously, so as not to overload theirtexts.

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The Bodily Virtues As Tools for theAcquisition of the Virtues of the Soul

It is good to be reminded of certain things frequently, and so I will begin by quoting for the most part from thewritings of others. For what I say is not my own invention but conies from the words and discernment of the divineScriptures and the holy fathers.

St John of Damaskos affirms that the bodily virtues-or, rather, tools of virtue - are essential, for without them thevirtues of the soul cannot be acquired.' But one must pursue them in humility and with spiritual knowledge. If theyare not pursued in this way, but only for themselves, then they serve no purpose, just as plants are useless if they donot bear any fruit. Moreover, no one can fully master any art without long application and the excision of his owndesires. Hence, after ascetic practice we need spiritual knowledge, total devotion to God in all things, and carefulstudy of the divine Scriptures; for without these things no one can ever acquire virtue. The person enabled by graceto devote himself utterly and always to God has achieved the highest good; he who has not reached this point shouldtake care not to grow negligent in any way. Blessed are they who are completely devoted to God, either throughobedience to someone

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The Bodily Virtues As Tools for theAcquisition of the Virtues of the Soul

experienced in the practice of the virtues and living an ordered life in stillness, or eke through themselves living in

stillness and total detachment, scrupulously obedient to God's will, and seeking the advice of experienced men ineverything they say or think. Blessed above all are those who seek to attain dispassion and spiritual knowledgeunlabonously through their total devotion to God: as God Himself has said through His prophet, "Devote yourselvesto stillness and know that lam God'(Ps. 46:10).

Those who live in the world - or rather who live after the fashion of the world, for this includes many so-calledmonks - should try to attain a measure of devotion, as did the righteous men of old, so as to examine their unhappysoul before their death and to amend or humble them, and not to bring them to utter destruction through their totalignorance and their conscious or unconscious sins. David, indeed, was a king; but every night he watered his bedwith tears because of his sense of the divine presence (cf Ps. 6:6). And Job says: "The hair of my flesh stood up'(Job 4:15). Let us then, like those living in the world, devote at least a small part of the day and night to God; and letus consider what we are going to say in our defense before our righteous Judge on the terrible day of judgment. Letus take trouble over this, for it is essential in view of the threat of agelong punishment; and let us not be troubledabout how we shall live if we are poor or how we can grow rich so as to give alms, thus stupidly devoting all ourattention to worldly matters. We have to work, St John Chrysostom says; but we need not concern or troubleourselves about many things, as our Lord told Martha (cf. Luke 10 : 4i). For concern with this life prevents thatconcern with one's own soul and its state which is the purpose of the man who devotes himself to God and isattentive to himself. It is said in the Law, "Be attentive to yourself" (Deut. 15:9. LXX). St Basil the Great has writtenabout this text with marvelous wisdom.'

The Guarding of the Intellect

As St John of Damaskos says, without attentiveness and watchfulness of the intellect we cannot be saved andrescued from the devil, who walks about Tike a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Pet. 5:8). For thisreason the Lord often said to His disciples, 'Watch and pray; for you do not know at what hour

your Lord is coming'(Matt. 26:41, 24:42). Through them He was giving a warning to us all about the remembrance of death, so that weshould be prepared to offer a defense, grounded in works and attentiveness, that will be acceptable to God. For thedemons, as St Hilarion has said, are immaterial and sleepless, concerned only to fight against us and to destroy oursouls through word, act and thought. We lack a similar persistence, and concern ourselves now with our comfort andwith ephemeral opinion, now with worldly matters, now with a thousand and one other things. We are not in theleast interested in examining our life, so that our intellect may develop the habit of so doing and may give attentionto itself unremittingly.

.As Solomon says, "We walk among many snares' (Ecclus. 9:13); and St John Chrysostom has written aboutthem, explaining what they are with great precision and wisdom. The Lord Himself, wishing to purge us of allworldly care, exhorts us not to bother about what we eat or wear, but to have only a single concern: how to be saved'as a roe from the snare and as a bird from the net' (Prov. 6:5. LXX), in this way gaining the quick-sightedness ofthe roe and the soaring flight of the bird. It is truly remarkable that these things are said by King Solomon; and hisfather, too, said the same. Both of them lived, in virtue and wisdom with great attentiveness and many asceticstruggles. Yet, after being granted so many gifts of grace and even the manifestation of God, they were overcome,alas, by sin: the first lamented both murder and adultery, while the second committed many terrible acts (cf. 2 Sam.chs. 11-12; 1 Kgs. ch. 11). As St John Klimakos and Philimon the Ascetic put it, does this not fill anyone of

terror? In our weakness, how can we not shudder and try to escape from the distractions of this life, we who arenothing and who are as insensate as brutes? Wretched as 1 am, would that 1 had been true to my nature, as animalsare; for the dog is better than 1.

If we want to perceive our lethal condition, we must abandon our own desires and all the preoccupations of thislife. Through this flight from everything, let us assiduously devote ourselves to God with a devotion that is trulyblessed and divine. Let each of us seek his own soul through studying the divine Scriptures, either in perfectobedience of soul and body or in stillness following the angelic way. This is especially important for those who areas yet subject to the passions and cannot control their own desires, whether great or small.

'Sit in your own cell, it has been said, "and your cell will teach you all things." Or as St Basil puts it, 'Stillnessinitiates the soul's purification'. It is also true that Solomon says, 'God has given noxious distraction to the sons ofmen, so that they may be distracted by vain things' (cf Eccles. 1:3). This is to prevent their mindless andimpassioned inertia from dragging them down into what is even worse.

What, however, are we to say about one who has by God's grace been rescued from both these pitfalls and hasbecome a monk, wearing the angelic habit of the solitary or monastic life, and thereby, as St Dionysios theAreopagite says, showing himself to be, in word and action, so far as this is possible, an image of the one and onlyGod? Should not such a person always devote himself to God and be attentive with his intellect in everything heundertakes, meditating continually on God in accordance with the state he has attained? This is what Ephrem andother holy fathers recommend to those setting out on the spiritual path. One man should have a psalm on his

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Obedience and Stillness

lips, another a verse of a hymn; all those who haw not yet been found worthy of entering the realm of

contemplation and spiritual knowledge, the fathers tell us, should attend with the intellect to psalms and troparia. Inthis way each will be engaged in some kind of meditation, whether working or traveling or lying down before sleep.As soon as each has finished his appointed rule of prayer, he should at once enclose his intellect in some form ofmeditation, lest the enemy find hmi unoccupied in the remembrance of God and attack him with vanities or worse.This counsel is given to all.

By means of the virtues of soul and body, and after many struggles, a person is enabled to rise noetically, byChrist's grace, and to engage in spiritual labor - the labor of the intellect - so that he begins to grieve inwardly forhis own soul. When this happens, he should guard as the apple of his eye the thought that induces pain-laden tears,to use the words of St John Klimakos. He should continue to do this until God in His providence, to prevent himgrowing proud, withdraws the fire and the water. The fire is the heart's pain and its burning faith; the water is tears.And they are not given to all, says St Athanasios the Great, but only to those enabled by grace to see the terriblethings that occur before and after death, and who in stillness bear them constantly in mind. As Isaiah says: 'The earof the hesychast hears strange wonders' (cf. Job 4:12); and again: 'Devote yourself to stillness and know' (Ps.46:10).

Stillness alone engenders knowledge of God, for it is of the greatest help even to the weakest and to those mostsubject to the passions. It enables them to live without distraction and to withdraw from human society, from thecares and encounters that darken the intellect. I mean not simply worldly cares but also those that appearinsignificant and sinless. As St John Klimakos says, "A small hair will irritate the eye.' And St Isaac says, "Do notthink that avarice consists simply in the possession of silver or gold; it is present whenever our thought is attached tosomething." The lord Himself has said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:21) - either indivine or in worldly thoughts and concerns. For this reason all should be detached and should devote themselves toGod. If they live in

the world, they can in this way attain at least some measure of understanding and spiritual knowledge. Or theymay devote themselves wholly to God, making it their one concern to conform to His will; and then God, seeingtheir intention, will grant them rest through spiritual knowledge. By this means He confers on them the meditationthat belongs to the first stage of contemplation, which enables them to acquire inexpressible contrition of soul and tobecome poor in spirit (cf. Matt. 5:3). Leading them in this way gradually through the other stages of contemplation.He will make it possible for them to keep the Beatitudes until they attain peace in their thoughts. This peace is the"realm" or "dwelling-place of God', as Evagnos says, referring to the Psalter: "In peace is His dwelling-place' (Ps.76 : 2. LXX).

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The Eight Stages of Contemplation

The stages of contemplation are, it seems to me, eight in number. Seven pertain to this present age, while theeighth is the pursuit of the age to come, as St Isaac says.

The first stage, according to St Dorotheos, is knowledge of the tribulations and trials of this life. This fills us withgrief for all the damage done to human nature through sin.

The second is knowledge of our own faults and of God's bounty, as St John Klimakos, St Isaac and many otherfathers express it.

The third is knowledge of the terrible things that await us before and after death, as revealed in the HolyScriptures.

The fourth is deep understanding of the life led by our Lord Jesus Christ in this world, and of the words andactions of His disciples and the other saints, the martyrs and the holy fathers.

The fifth is knowledge of the nature and flux of things, as St Gregory and St John of Damaskos put it.

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The Eight Stages of Contemplation

The sixth is contemplation of created beings, that is to say, knowledge and understanding of God's visiblecreation.

The seventh is understanding of God's spiritual creation.

The eighth is knowledge -concerning God, or what we call "theology".

These are the eight stages of contemplation. The first three are suitable for one still engaged in ascetic practice, sothat with many bitter tears he may purify his soul from all the passions and may be allowed through God's grace toproceed to the remaining stages.

The last five stages pertain to the contemplative or gnostic. Through them he maintains a careful watch over theactivities of both body and soul, and performs them rightly. As a result he is enabled to grasp these later stagesclearly with his intellect.

Thus the man engaged in ascetic practice begins to enter the path of spiritual knowledge by way of the first threestages; and by concentrating on his task and by meditating on the thoughts produced within him, he progresses inthem until they are established in him. In this way the next stage of knowledge enters automatically into his intellect.

The same happens with aU the remaining stages.

To make things quite clear, I will speak, despite my incompetence, about each stage of contemplation, and aboutwhat is understood and said at each stage. In this way we can discover how we ought to act when grace begins toopen the eyes of our soul and we come with astonishment to understand thoughts and

words that instill in us fear ofGod or, in other words, contrition of soul

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The First Stage of Contemplation

The first stage of contemplation is that which leads the seeker to all the later stages. The person who is called tothis first, stage should act as follows. He should seat himself facing the east, as once did Adam, and meditate in thisway:

'Adam then sat and wept because of his joss of the delights of paradise, beating his eyes with his fists and saying:"0 Merciful One, have mercy on me, for I have fallen."

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The First Stage of Contemplation

'Seeing the angel driving him out and closing the door to the divme garden, Adam groaned aloud and said: "0Merciful One, have mercy on me, for I have fallen."

After that, reflecting on what then took place, he should begin to lament in this way, grieving with all his soul andshaking his head and saying with great sorrow of heart:

Woe is me, a sinner! What has happened to me? Alas, what was I and what have I become! What have I lost, whatfound? Instead of paradise, this perishable world. Instead of God, and life in the company of the angels, the deviland the demons of impurity. In the place of rest, hard labor; in the place of gladness and joy, the sorrows andtribulations of this world; instead of peace and endless felicity, fear and tears of sorrow. In the place of virtue andjustice, injustice and sin. Instead of goodness and dispassion, evil and passion; instead of wisdom and intimacy withGod, ignorance and exile; instead of detachment and freedom, a

life full of worries and the worst kind of slavery.Woe, woe is me! How, created a king, have I become in my folly a slave of passion? How can I have embraceddeath instead of life through my disobedience? Alas! What has happened to me, pitiful that I am, because of mythoughtlessness? What shall I do? War and confusion beset me, illness and temptation, danger and shipwreck, fearand sorrow, passion and sin, bitterness and distress. What shall I do? Where shall I flee? 'All doors are closed to

me', as Susanna said (Sus. 1:22).

I do not know what to ask for. If I ask for life, 1 fear the trials of life, its ups and downs, its conflicts. 1 see howSatan, the angel who once rose as the morning star (cf. Isa. 14:12), has now become the devil, as we call him. 1 seehow the first-created man was sent into exile (cf. Gen. 3:23); how Cain became his brother's murderer (cf Gen.4:8); how Canaan was cursed (cf. Gen. 9:25); 1 see the citizens of Sodom burned by fire (cf. Gen. 19:24-25); Esaubanished (cf. Gen. 25:33); 1 see the Israelites subjected to God's wrath (cf Num. 14:34); 1 see Gehazi and Judas, theapostle, cast out because they were sick with avarice (cf. 2 Kgs. 5:26-27; Matt. 26:15,24); I see David, the greatprophet and kmg, lamenting his double sin (cf. Ps. 51); 1 see Solomon, for all his wisdom, fallen (cf. 1 Kgs. 11:9-

11);

The First Stage of Contemplation

1 see how one of the seven deacons and one of the forty martyrs lapsed, as St Basil the Great says; Gleefully theprince of evil entrapped the mean-spirited Judas, one of the twelve; he snatched man from Eden, and ensnared oneof the forty martyrs. Grieving for him the same Basil the Great says, "Foolish and worthy of our tears is he, for hewent astray in both lives: in this life he was destroyed by fire and in the next went to eternal fire. And 1 see manyothers, numberless, who fell; not only unbelievers, but also many of the fathers, in spite of all their labors.

Yet who am 1, who am worse and more obdurate and weaker than them all? What shall 1 call myselt7 ForAbraham says that he is 'but dust and ashes' (Gen. 18:27); David calls himself "a dead dog" (2 Sam. 9:8) and "a flea'(1 Sam. 24:14) in Israel; Solomon calls himself 'a little child, not knowing left from right' (cf. 1 Kgs. 3:7); the threeholy children say, 'We have become a shame and a reproach' (Song of the Three Children, verse 10); Isaiah theprophet says, 'Woe is me, for I am undone, because 1 am a man of unclean lips' (Isa. 6:5); the prophet Habakkuksays, "1 am a child" (Jer. 1:6); St Paul calls himself the chief of sinners (cf. 1 Tim. 1:15); and all the rest said thatthey were nothing. What then should 1 do? Where shall 1 hide myself from my many crimes? What will become ofme, who am nothing, worse than nothing? For that which is nothing has not sinned, nor has it received God'sblessings as 1 have. Alas, how shall 1 pass the rest of my life? And how shall 1 escape the snares of the devil? For thedemons are sleepless and immaterial, death is at hand, and 1 am weak. Lord, help me; do not let Thy creature perish,for Thou carest for me in my misery. 'Make known to me. Lord, which way 1 should go; for 1 lift up my soul toThee' (Ps. 143:8). 'Forsake me not, 0 Lord my God, be not far from me; make haste to help me, 0 Lord of mysalvation'(Ps. 38:21-22).

By such words the soul is made contrite, if it has at least some sensibility. By persisting in this way, and growingaccustomed to the fear of God, the intellect begins to understand and meditate on the second stage of contemplation.

The Second Stage of Contemplation

Woe is me, unhappy that I am! What shall 1 do? 1 have sinned greatly; many blessings are bestowed on me; 1 amvery weak. Many are the temptations: sloth overwhelms me, forgetfulness benights me and will not let me seemyself and my many crimes. Ignorance is evil; conscious transgression is worse; virtue is difficult to achieve; thepassions are many; the demons are crafty and subtle; sin is easy; death is near; the reckoning is bitter. Alas, whatshall 1 do? Where shall I flee from myself? For 1 am the cause of my own destruction. 1 have been honored with freewill and no one can force me. I have sinned, 1 sin constantly,

and am indifferent to any good thing, though no oneconstrains me. Whom can I blame? God, who is good and full of compassion, who always longs for us to turn toHim and repent? The angels, who love and protect me? Men, who also desire my progress? The demons? Theycannot constrain anyone unless, because of negligence or despair, he chooses to destroy himself. Who is then toblame? Surely it is myself?

1 begin to see that my soul is being destroyed, and yet 1 make no effort 'to embark on a godly life. Why, 0 mysoul, are you so indifferent about yourself? Why, when you sin, are you not as ashamed before God and His angelsas you are before men? Alas, alas, for I do not feel the shame before my Creator and Master that 1 feel before a man.Before a man I cannot sin, but do all I can to appear to be acting righteously; yet standing before God 1 think evilthoughts and often am not ashamed to speak of them. What madness! Though I sin, I have no fear of God whowatches me, and yet 1 cannot tell to a single man what 1 have done so as to give him a chance to correct me. Alas,for 1 know the punishment and yet am unwilling to repent. 1 love the heavenly kingdom, and yet do not acquirevirtue. 1 believe in God and constantly disobey His commandments. 1 hate the devil, and yet do not stop doing whathe wants. If I pray, I lose interest and become unfeeling. If I fast, I become proud, and damn myself all the more. If Ikeep vigil, I think I have achieved something, and so I have no profit from it. If I read, I do one of two evil things inmy obduracy: either I read for the sake of profane learning and self-esteem, and so am farther benighted; or byreading, and not acting in the spirit of what I read.

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I simply increase my guilt. If by God's grace I happen to stop sinning in outward action, I do not stop sinningcontinually in what I say. And if God's grace should protect me also from this, I continue to provoke His wrath bymy evil thoughts. Alas, what can I do? Wherever I go, I find sin. Everywhere there are demons. Despair is worst ofall. I have provoked God, I have saddened His angels, I have frequently injured and offended men.

I would like. Lord, to erase the record of my sins by tears, and through repentance to live the rest of my lifeaccording to Thy will. But the enemy deceives me and battles with my soul. Lord, before I perish completely, save

I have sinned against Thee, Savior, hke the prodigal son; receive me. Father, in my repentance and have mercy onme, 0 God.

I cry to Thee, 0 Christ my Savior, with the voice of the publican: be gracious to me, as to him, and have mercyupon me, 0 God."

What will happen in the last days? What is to come afterwards? How hapless I am! 'Who will give water to myhead and a fountain of tears to my eyes?' (Jer. 9:1. LXX). Who can grieve for me as I deserve? I cannot do so.Come, mountains, cover me in my abjectness. What have I to say? 0 how many blessings has God bestowed on me,blessings that only He knows of, and how many terrible things in act, word and thought have I done in myingratitude, always provoking my Benefactor. And the more long-suffering He is, the more I disdain Him, becomingharder in heart than lifeless stones. Yet I do not despair, but acknowledge Thy great compassion.

I have no repentance, no tears. Therefore I entreat Thee, Savior, to make me turn back before I die and to grant merepentance, so that I may be spared punishment.

0 Lord my God, do not abandon me, though I am nothing before Thee, though I am wholly a sinner. How shall Ibecome aware of my many sins? For unless I become aware, severe is my condemnation. For me Thou hast createdheaven and earth, the four elements and all that is formed from them, as St Gregory the Theologian says. I shall keepsilence as to the rest, for I am unworthy to say anything

because of my many crimes. Who, even if he had the intellect of an angel, could grasp all the countless blessings Ihave been given? Yet because I do not change

my ways I shall lose them all.

By meditating in this way, a man gradually advances to the third stage of contemplation.

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Again he laments: Alas, what agony the soul experiences when it is separated from the body. How many tears itsheds then, and there is no one to take pity on it. Turning its eyes to the angels, it entreats in vain. Stretching its

hands towards men, it finds no one to help it.

I weep and grieve when I think of death and see man's beauty, created by God in His own image, lying in thegrave, ugly, abject, its physical form destroyed. What is this mystery that has befallen us? How have we been givenover to corruption? How have we been yoked to death? Truly it is by God's command, as it is written. Ah, what willI do at the moment of my death, when the demons encircle my unhappy soul, bearing the indictment of the sins Ihave committed, consciously or unconsciously, in word, act and thought, and demanding from me my defense? Butalas, even without any other sin, I am already condemned-and rightly so-for not having kept the commandments-Tell me, my wretched soul, where are your baptismal promises? What has happened to your covenant with Christand your renunciation of Satan? Where is your keeping of God's commandments, your imitation of Christ throughthe virtues of body and soul? Because of this you were called a Christian. What has happened to your profession ofthe monastic habit? Should you blame bodily weakness, where is the faith that casts all care upon the Lord, the faithby which, even had it been no bigger than a mustard seed, you would have been able to move mountains (cf Matt.17:20)? Where is the complete repentance that repels every evil word or action?

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Where is the contrition of soul and the deep inward grid? Where is the gentleness, the generosity, the heart'sfreedom from evil thoughts, the all-embracing self-control that restrains each member of the body and every thoughtand desire that is not indispensable for the soul's salvation or for bodily life? Where is the patience that endures somany tribulations for the sake of the kingdom of heaven? Where is the gratitude in all things? The ceaseless prayer? The recollection of death? The tears of distress for my failure to love? Where is the moral judgment attuned to God,that keeps the soul from the snares of our enemies? Where is the self-restraint that prevents anything contrary to thewill of God from being done or deliberately thought? Where is the courage that endures terrible sufferings and thatadvances full of hope against the adversary? Where is the justice that gives to each thing its due, the humility thatknows its own weakness and ignorance, and the godlike compassion that would have saved me from all the wiles ofthe demons? Where is dispassion and perfect love, the peace that excels all intellect (cf Phil. 4:7), whereby I shouldhave been called a son of God (cf Matt. 5:9)? Even without bodily strength he who wishes can possess all thesethings simply through his own resolution.

What can I say about all this? What can I do? If in my uncertainty I lose heart for a while because I havecompletely failed to do what I should to the limits of my power, I shall fall lower than Hades, as St Athanasios theGreat says. How wretched I am! What have I brought upon myself, not only through my sins, but rather through myrefusal to repent! For if like the prodigal son I had repented, my loving Father would have received me back (cf.

Luke 15:11-32). And if I had been as honest as the publican (of. Luke 18:13), condemning myself alone and no oneelse, I too would have received forgiveness of sins from God, especially if 1 had called upon Him with all my soulas the publican did. As it is, 1 still do not regard myself in this way. Because of this, 1 fear that 1 shall dwell in Hadeswith the demons, and 1 live in dread of the coming judgment, with the river of fire, the thrones, and the open books(cf. Dan. 7:9-12), angels ranning ahead, all humankind standing by, everything naked and exposed (cf. Heb. 4:13)before the fearsome and righteous Judge.

How shall 1 endure the examination, the displeasure of the awe-inspiring

impartial Judge, the gathering ofnumberless angels, the retribution demanded with terrible threats, the decision that cannot

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be altered? How shall 1 bear the ceaseless lamenting and the useless tears, the pitch darkness and the worm thatdoes not sleep, the unquenchable fire and many torments? How bear exclusion from the kingdom and separationfrom the saints, the departure of the angels and the alienation from God, the soul's enfeeblement and eternal death,the fear, the pain, the distress, the shame, the torture of the conscience?

Woe is me, a sinner. What has happened to me? Why should 1 destroy myself so wrongly? 1 still have time forrepentance. The Lord calls me: shall 1 procrastinate? How long, my soul, will you remain in your sins? How longwill you put off repentance? Think of the judgment to come, cry out to Christ your God; Searcher of hearts, 1 havesinned; before Thou condemnest me, have mercy upon me! At Thy awesome coming, 0 Christ, may 1 not hear: '1know you not" (Matt. 25:12). For we have placed our hope in Thee, our Savior, even though in our negligence wefail to keep Thy commandments. But, we pray Thee, spare our souls. Alas, Lord, for 1 have grieved Thee and did notperceive it; yet behold, through Thy grace 1 have begun to perceive, and so am filled with confusion. My unhappysoul is shaken with fear.

Shall 1 be allowed to live for a short time longer, so as to weep bitter tears and cleanse my defiled body and soul?Or, after sorrowing for a while, shall 1 then stop once more, obdurate as always? What shall 1 do to acquireunceasing pain of soul? Shall 1 fast and keep vigil? Yet without humility 1 will gain nothing. Shall 1 read and singpsalms with my mouth only? For my passions have darkened my intellect and 1 cannot understand the meaning ofwhat is said. Shall 1 fall prostrate before Thee, the giver of all blessings? But 1 have no confidence. My life iswithout hope; 1 have destroyed my soul. Lord, help me and receive me as the publican; for like the prodigal 1 havesinned against heaven and before Thee (cf Luke 15:18). 1 have sinned like the harlot who came to Thee weeping,and of

whom it is written: "Full of despair on account of life, her ways well known, she came to Thee bearing myrrh

and crying: "0 virgin-bom, do not cast me away, harlot though I am; do not spurn my tears, 0 joy of the angels; butreceive me in my repentance, 0 Lord, and in Thy great mercy do not reject me, a sinner." "For I, too, am in despairbecause of my many sins, yet I am welt known to Thine ineffable compassion and the boundless sea of Thy mercies.

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Casting my soul's despair into this sea, I dare to concentrate my intellect in holy remembrance of Thee; and,rising up, in fear and trembling I make this one request: that unworthy though I am I may be found worthy to be Thyservant; that by grace I may have an intellect that is free from all form, shape, color or materiality; that, as Danielonce bowed down before Thy angel (cf. Dan. 10:9), I may fall on hands and knees before Thee, the only God,Creator of all, and offer Thee first thanksgiving and then confession. In this way shall I begin to seek Thy most holywill, confessing Thy grace in all the blessings that Thou hast granted me, who am but dirt, dust and ashes, andknowing that, being wholly a creature of earth, it is only through the intellect that I am enabled to approach Thee.

Then, conscious that Thy look is upon me, with all my soul I will cry out and say: 0 most merciful Lord, I thankThee, I glorify Thee, I hymn Thee, I venerate Thee, for unworthy though I am Thou hast found me worthy in thishour to give thanks to Thee and to be mindful of the wonders and blessings - numberless and unfathomable, visibleand invisible, known and unknown - that Thy grace has bestowed and still bestows on our souls and bodies. Iconfess Thy gifts; I do not hide Thy blessings; I proclaim Thy mercies; I acknowledge Thee, 0 Lord my God, withall my heart, and glorify Thy name for ever. "For great is Thy mercy towards me' (Ps. 86:13), and inexpressible isThy forbearance and long-suffering over my many sins and iniquities, over the heinous and godless things that Ihave done, and still do, and will do in the future. From these Thy grace has saved me,

whether they were committedconsciously or unconsciously, in word, in action, or in thought. Thou knowest them all, 0 Lord, Searcher of hearts,from my birth until my death; and, abject that I am, I dare to confess them before Thee. 'I have sinned, I havetransgressed, I have acted godlessly' (cf. Dan. 9:5), 'I have done evil in thy sight' (Ps. 51:4), and I am not worthy togaze upon the height of heaven.

Yet, finding courage in Thy inexpressible compassion, in Thy goodness and tender mercy that excel ourunderstanding, I fall before Thee and entreat Thee, Lord: 'Have mercy upon me, 0 Lord, for I am weak' (Ps. 6:2),and forgive me my many crimes. Do not allow me to sin again or to stray from Thy straight path, or to injure oroffend anyone, but check in me every iniquity, every evil habit, every mindless impulse of soul and body, of angerand desire; and teach me to act according to Thy will.

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Have mercy on my brethren and fathers, on all monks and priests everywhere, on my parents, my brothers andsisters, my relatives, on those who have served us and those who serve us now, on those who pray for us and whohave asked us to pray for them, on those who hate us and those who love us, on those whom 1 have injured oroffended, on those who have injured or offended me or who will do so in the future, and on all who trust in Thee.Forgive us every sin whether deliberate or unintentional. Protect our lives and our departure out of this world fromimpure spirits, from every temptation, from all sin and malice, from presumption and despair, from lack of faith,from folly, from self-inflation and cowardice, from delusion and unniliness, from the wiles and snares of the devil.In Thy compassion grant us what is good for our souls in this age and in the age to be. Give rest to our fathers andbrethren who have departed this life before us, and through the prayers of them all have mercy on my unhappy selfin my depravity. See how feeble 1 am in all things: rectify my conduct, direct my life and death into the paths ofpeace, fashion me into what Thou wilt and as Thou wilt, whether 1 want it or not. Grant only that 1 shall not fail tofind myself

at Thy right hand on the day of judgment. Lord Jesus Christ my God, even though 1 am the least of allThy servants to be saved.

Give peace to Thy world, and in ways best known to Thee have mercy on all men. Count me worthy to partake ofThy pure body and Thy precious blood, for the remission of sins, for communion in the Holy Spirit, as a foretaste ofeternal life in Thee with Thine elect, through the intercessions of Thy most pure Mother, of the angels and thecelestial powers and of all Thy saints; for Thou art blessed through all the ages. Amen.

Most holy Lady, Mother of God, all celestial powers, holy angels and archangels, and all saints, intercede for me asinner.

God our Master, Father almighty. Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son, and Holy Spirit, one Godhead, onePower, have mercy on me a sinner.

After praying in this way you should immediately address your own thoughts and say three times: '0 come, let usworship and fall down before God our King.' Then you should begin the psalms.

reciting the Trisagion after each subsection of the Psalter, and enclosing your intellect within the words you aresaying. After the Trisagion say "Lord, have mercy' forty times; and then make a prostration and say once withinyourself, 'I have sinned. Lord, forgive me'. On standing, you should stretch out your arms and say once, "God, bemerciful to me a sinner'. After praying in this way, you should say once more, "0 come, let us worship...' threetimes, and then another sub-section of the Psalter in the same way.

When, however, God's grace kindles a sense of deep penitence in the heart, you should allow your intellect to bebathed in tears of compunction, even if this means that your mouth stops reciting psalms and your mind is madecaptive to what St Isaac the Syrian calls "blessed captivity". For now is the time to harvest, not to plant (cf.Eccles.3:2). You should therefore persist in such thoughts, so that your heart grows more full of compunction and bearsfruit in the form of godly

tears. St John Klimakos says that if a particular word moves you to compunction, youshould linger over it. Every bodily activity - by which I mean fasting, vigils, psalmody, spiritual reading, stillnessand so on - is directed towards the purification of the intellect; but without inward grief the intellect cannot bepurified, and so be united to God through the pure prayer that transports it beyond all conceptual thought, and sets itfree from all form and figure. Yet all that is good in bodily activities has good results - and the reverse is also true.Everything, however, demands discrimination if it is to be used for the good; without discrimination we are ignorantof the true nature of things.

Many of us may be shocked when we see disagreement in what was said and done .by the holy fathers. Forinstance, the Church has received through its tradition the practice of singing many hymns and troparia; but St JohnKlimakos, in praising those who have received from God the gift of inward grief, says that such people do not singhymns among themselves. Again, while speaking of those in a state of

pure prayer, St Isaac says that often it happens that a person so concentrates his intellect during prayer that, likeDaniel the prophet (cf. Dan. 10:9), he falls unbidden to his knees, his hands outstretched and his eyes gazing atChrist's Cross; his thoughts are changed and his limbs are made weak because of the new thoughts that arisespontaneously in his intellect. Many of the holy fathers write similarly about such persons, how in the rapt state oftheir intellect they not only pass beyond hymns and psalmody but, as Evagrios says, even become oblivious of theintellect itself. Yet, because of the feebleness of our intellect, the Church is right to commend the singing of hymns

and troparia; for by this means those of us who lack spiritual knowledge may willy-nilly praise God through thesweetness of the melody, while those who possess such knowledge and so understand the words are brought to astate of compunction.

Thus, as St John of Damaskos puts it, we are led as though up a ladder to the thinking of good thoughts. Themore habitual these thoughts become, the more the longing for God draws us on to understand and worship theFather 'in Spirit and in truth' (John 4:24), as the Lord said. St Paul also indicates this when he says: "I had ratherspeak five words whose meaning 1 understand than ten thousand words in a strange tongue' (1 Cor. 14:19); andagain: 'I wish that men would pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without anger and without quarrelling' (1 Tim.2:8). Thus hymns and troparia are remedies for our weakness, while the experiences of rapture mark the perfectionof the intellect. This is the solution to such questions. For 'all things are good in their proper time" (cf, Ecclus.39:34); and, as Solomon says, 'For each thing there is a proper time" (Eccles. 3:1). But to those ignorant of thisproper time everything will appear discordant and untimely.

When one has attained the level of good thoughts, one should take extreme care to keep these points in mind, lestout of negligence or conceit one is deprived of God's grace, as St Isaac says. When God-given thoughts increase in aman's soul and lead him toward greater humility and compunction, he should always give thanks, acknowledgingthat only by God's grace does he know such things, and regarding himself as unworthy of them. If good thoughts

cease and his mind is once more darkened, losing its awe and its sense of inward grief, he should be greatlydistressed and humble himself in word and deed; for grace has already abandoned him, so that he may realize hisown weakness, acquire humility and try to amend his life, as St Basil the Great says. For had he not neglected thatinward grief which is so dear to God he would not have lacked tears when he wished for them. That is why weshould always be conscious of our own weakness and the power of God's grace, and should neither lose hope ifsomething happens to us, nor be emboldened to think that we are anything whatsoever. Rather we should alwayshope in God with humility. This applies particularly to those who in thought and action are seeking to regain (he giftof

tears: they had once been granted this providential grace, but they failed to preserve it because of past, present orfuture negligence or self-elation, as we have explained.

If someone has deliberately relinquished these gifts of grace - inward grief, tears and radiant thoughts - what doeshe deserve if not deep distress? For what greater folly is there than that of the man who, after starting from what iscontrary to nature and attaining through grace a state above nature - by which I mean tears of understanding andlove - then reverts through some trivial act or extraneous thought and his own willfulness to the ignorance of a beast.

as a dog to its own vomit? Yet if such a man decides once more to devote himself to God, reading the divineScriptures with attentiveness and the remembrance of death, and keeping his intellect, so far as he can, free fromvain thoughts during prayer, he can regain what he has lost. And he can do this all the more readily if he is neverangry with anyone, however greatly he suffers at the other's hands, and if he never allows anyone to be angry withhim, but does all he can through his actions and his words to remedy things. When this happens his intellect exultsstill more, being released from the turbulence of anger; and he learns by practice never to neglect his own soul,fearing lest he should be once again abandoned. And because of his fear he is kept from fatting, and is blessedalways with tears of repentance and inward grief until he attains the tears of joy and love, whereby through Christ'sgrace his thoughts are set at peace.

Yet we who are still impassioned and obdurate should always meditate on words of grief, and should examineourselves daily, both before our set rule of prayer, during it, and afterwards. We should do this if we are stillstruggling, despite our weakness, to devote ourselves

to God and to turn away from everything else, as St Isaac puts it; and we should do it even if we have so turnedaway and remain concentrated, our eyes sleepless and our minds watchful, as St John Klimakos says. Consider whatprogress you

are making in these things, so that your soul may be chastened and may begin to experience the gift oftears, as St Dorotheos says.

Such, then, are the first three stages of contemplation, by means of which we are enabled to go forward to thefurther stages.

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The Fourth Stage of Contemplation

The fourth stage of contemplation consists in the understanding of our Lord's incarnation and His manner of lifein this world, to the point that we practically forget even to eat, as St Basil the Great writes. This, according to StJohn Klimakos, is what happened to King David (cf. Ps. 102:4) when his mind was rapt in ecstasy at God's

marvels.' As St Basil says, he was at a loss as to what to do in return: 'What shall I give to the Lord in return for allHis benefits towards me?" (Ps. 116:12). For our sakes God lived among men; because of our corrupted nature theLogos became flesh and dwelt among us. The Source of Blessing visited the ungrateful, the Liberator the captives,the Sun of Righteousness those sitting in darkness. The Man of Dispassion came to the Cross, Light to Hades, Lifeto death. Resurrection to the fallen. To Him let us cry: "Our God, glory to Thee!' St John of Damaskos says:'Heaven was amazed, and the earth's ends were astounded, that God should appear in bodily form to men and thatyour womb, 0 Mother of God, became capable of containing the heavens; because of this the orders of angels and ofmen magnify you." And again: "All who heard shuddered at the ineffable condescension of God; how the Most Highof His own will descended even to the body, bom man from a virgin womb. Because of this we the faithful magnifythe pure Mother of our God.'

"Come, all peoples, and believe. Let us climb the holy and heavenly

mountain; free from materiality, let us stand in the city of the living God and behold with our intellect theimmaterial godhead of the Father and the Spirit blazing forth in the Only-begotten Son. Thou hast enraptured mewith longing for Thee, 0 Christ, and hast transformed me with the intensity of Thy divine love; with immaterial fireconsume my sins and fill me with delight in Thee, so that in my joy, 0 Lord, I may praise Thy first and secondcoming. Thou art all tenderness, 0 Savior, all my desire, truly the goal of my insatiable longing; Thou art all beautyirresistible.'

If anyone through the virtues of body and soul has received knowledge of these things, and of the mysterieshidden in the words of the holy fathers, of the divine Scriptures, and especially of the Holy Gospels, he will neverlose his longing or cease from shedding the tears that come to him unbidden. And we, too, who do no more thanlisten to the Scriptures, should devote ourselves to them and meditate on them so constantly that through ourpersistence a longing for God is impressed upon our hearts, as St Maxnnos says. For this is what the holy fathers didbefore they acquired direct spiritual knowledge. All the longing of the martyrs was directed solely toward God. Theywere united to Him through love and sang His praises, as St John of Damaskos says of the three holy children:'These most blessed children, risking their lives in Babylon for their ancestral laws, disdained the foolishcommandment of their king; cast into the flames yet not consumed, they sang a hymn worthy of the One who keptthem safe.' This is quite natural; for when a person truly perceives God's marvels he is wholly beside himself and isoblivious of this transient life because he has understood the divine Scriptures, as St Isaac puts it.

Such a man is not like us: for though we may for a while be slightly stirred by the Scriptures, we are againplunged into darkness by laziness, forgetfulness and ignorance, and become obdurate because of our passions. But

he who has been purified of the passions through inward grief perceives the hidden mysteries in all the Scripturesand is astonished by them all, especially by the words and actions recorded in the Holy Gospels. He is amazed to seehow the wisdom of God

renders what is difficult easy, so that gradually it deifies man. He is filled with goodness, so that he lows hisenemies; he is merciful, as his Father is merciful (cf Luke 6:36); he is dispassionate, as God is dispassionate; he isendowed with every virtue and is perfect, as the Father is perfect (cf Matt. 5:48). In short, the Holy Bible teaches usthat what befits God befits man as well, so that he becomes god by divine adoption.

Who would not marvel at the teaching of the Holy Gospel? For, simply on condition that we choose rightly, Godgrants us complete rest in both this world and the next, and confers on us great honors. It is as the Lord said: 'Hewho humbles himself will be exalted' (Luke 18:14). St Peter bears this out when he leaves his nets and receives thekeys of heaven (cf. Matt. 16:19); and each of the other disciples, leaving behind what little he had, received into hischarge the whole world in this age and in the age to come. The eye has not seen, and the ear has not heard, andman's heart has not grasped the things that God has prepared for those who love Him' (1 Cor. 2:9). This is true notonly of the apostles, but also of all those who up to the present time have elected to pursue the spiritual life. As oneof the fathers says: 'Even though they struggled in the desert they had much repose.' He said this with reference tothe life that is tranquil and trouble-free.

Who has greater repose and honor, the person who devotes himself to God and acts accordingly, or the personinvolved in hustle, law courts and worldly cares? The person who always converses with God through meditation onthe Holy Scriptures and undistracted prayer and tears, or the person who is always on the go, who devotes himself tofraud and lawless actions which, when they come to nothing, leave him only with his exhaustion and perhapstwofold death? Consider how some of us endure even painful and dishonorable death all for nothing. Indeed, somefor purely destructive ends have inflicted the greatest injury on their own souls. I have in mind robbers, pirates,fornicators, instigators of

quarrels - all of them people who refused salvation and the repose, honor and rewards thatgo with it. How blind we are! We endure death for the sake of destruction, but do not love life for the sake ofsalvation. And if we prefer death to the kingdom of heaven, in what do we differ from the thief or grave-robber orsoldier? These, simply for the sake of food, have often endured the death that is to come as well as death in thispresent life.

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We must make Christ our primary goal; for on those who choose Him He confers the kingdom of heaven. Thismeans that in this present hfe we must rise spirituaUy above aU things, subjecting them all to Him. We must rule notonly: over external things but also over the body, through our non-attachment to it, and over death, through thecourage of our faith; then in the life to come we shall reign in our bodies eternally with Christ through the grace ofthe general resurrection. Death comes both to the righteous and to the sinner, but there is a great difference. Asmortals both die, and there is nothing extraordinary in that But the one dies without reward and possibly condemned;the other is blessed in this world and in the next.

What is the point of amassing riches? Despite his unwillingness, the seeming possessor will have to surrenderthem, not just at the moment of his death, but often before this, with much shame, tribulation and pain. Wealthbreeds innumerable trials - fear, anxiety, constant worry and troubles sought and unsought - and yet many haveendured even death for its sake. But God's holy commandment saves every man from all this and gives himcomplete freedom from anxiety and fear; often, indeed, it confers inexpressible delight on those who deliberatelychoose to rid themselves of possessions. For what brings more delight than to achieve dispassion, and no longer tobe under the sway of anger or the desire for worldly things? Regarding as nothing the things that most people valueand rising above them, we live as in paradise, or rather as in heaven, set free from all constraints through ouruntroubled devotion to God.

Because a person in such a state, joyfully accepts all that happens to him, all

things bring him repose; because heloves everyone, everyone loves him; because he is detached from all things, he rises above them all. Moreover, hehas no wish for the things that other people fight about and which cause them distress when they fail to acquirethem, even though they would only be condemned if they did acquire them. This detachment frees an acquisitiveperson from ail sufferings in this present life and in the life to come. Because he does not want anything that he doesnot possess, he is above and beyond all comfort and wealth; while to desire what one lacks is the greatest torment aman can suffer prior to age long torment. A person in this condition is a slave, even though he may appear to be arich man or a king. The commandments of the Lord are not burdensome (cf 1 John 5:3).

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Yet, abject as we are, we do not cany them out with any eagerness unless we are rewarded for it.

He who can partiaUy understand the grace of the Holy Gospel and the things that are in it-that is to say, the actionsand teachings of the Lord, His commandments and His doctrines. His threats and His promises-knows whatinexhaustible treasure he has found, even if he cannot speak about such things as he should, since what is heavenlyis inexpressible. For Christ is hidden in the Gospel, and he who wishes to find Him must first sell all that he has andbuy the Gospel (cf. Matt. 13:44). It is not enough merely to find Christ through one's reading, but one should alsoreceive Him in oneself by imitating His way of life in the world. For he who seeks Christ, says St Maxmios, shouldseek him not outside but inside himself Like Christ he should become sinless in body and soul, in so far as ahuman being can do this; and he should guard the testimony of his conscience (cf. 2 Cor. 1:12) with all his strength.In this way, even though in the eyes of the world he is poor and of no consequence, he will rule as a king over hiswill at all times, rising above it and rejecting it. For what is the use of appearing to be a king if you are a slave toanger and desire in this world, while in the next you will receive agelong punishment because you

would not keepthe commandments?

How witless we are when, for the sake of things that are paltry and transient, we do not aspire to receive great andeternal blessings. We reject what is good and pursue the opposite. What can be simpler than giving a glass of coldwater or a piece of bread, or than refraining from one's own desires and petty thoughts? Yet through such things thekingdom of heaven is offered to us, by the grace of Him who Said: 'Behold, the kingdom of heaven is within you'(Luke 17:21). For, as St John of Damaskos says, the kingdom of heaven is not far away, not outside us, but withinus. Simply choose to overcome the passions, and you will possess it within you because you live in accordance withGod's will. But if you do not choose to do this, you will end up with nothing. For the kingdom of God, say thefathers, is to live in conformity to God; and this is also the meaning of Christ's first and second coming.

We spoke of the second coming when dealing with inward grief. As for the first coming, he who through graceand with full

consciousness of soul grasps the significance of the incarnation should in his astonishment exclaim: Great artThou, 0 Lord, and marvelous are Thy works; and no word suffices to hymn Thy wonders. Behold, dear Lord, I Thyservant stand before Thee, speechless, motionless, awaiting the light of spiritual knowledge that comes from Thee.For Thou hast said. Lord, 'Without Me you can do nothing' (John 15:5). Teach me, therefore, about Thyself. Forthis reason I have dared, like the sister of Thy friend Lazarus (cf. Luke 10:39), to sit at Thy most pure feet, so that I

too may hear through my inteUect, if not about Thy incomprehensible divinity, then at least about the manner of Thyincarnate life in the world. In this way I shall gain some slight awareness of the meaning of what in Thy grace Thouhast

said in the Holy Gospel; and of how Thou hast dwelt among us, 'gentle and humble in heart' (Matt. 11:29), asThou Thyself hast said, so that we might learn from Thee to be the same. Thou hast lived in poverty, though Thouart rich in mercy; by Thy own free choice Thou hast endured toil and thirst, though Thou hast offered to theSamaritan woman living water (cf. John 4:10), and hast said: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink" (John7:37). For Thou art the source of healing, and who can hymn Thy manner of life in this world?

I am earth, ashes, dust, a transgressor, a suicide, who have sinned many times against Thee and continue to do so;yet Thou hast enabled me to grasp something of Thy actions and words; and I dare to ask Thee about them, hopingto see Thee by faith, although Thou art invisible to the whole of creation. Forgive me my boldness. For Thouknowest, 0 Lord, Searcher of hearts, that 1 do not ask out of idle curiosity, but seek to learn, I believe that if I amfound worthy of Thy spiritual knowledge, then in Thy compassion Thou wilt grant to me, as Thou dost to all wholong for Thee, the strength to imitate Thy life in the flesh; for it is by virtue of Thy incarnation that I by grace amcalled a Christian. Although, unlike Thy disciples, none of us is capable of enduring death for the sake of hisenemies, or of acquiring the poverty and virtue which Thou and they possessed,, yet each of us does what he canaccording to the strength of his resolve. For even if we were to die for Thy sake daily, still we could not repay Theewhat we owe. For Thou, 0 Lord, being perfect God and perfect man, hast lived in this world without sin and enduredall things on our behalf;

while we, even if we do endure something, suffer on our own account and for our own sins. Who' is not amazedwhen he thinks of Thy inexpressible self-abasement? For bemg God, inscrutable, all-powerful and ruling all things,enthroned above the cherubim - who are figures of wisdom in its multiplicity - on account of us, who have provokedThy anger from the beginning. Thou hast humbled Thyself, accepting to be bom and brought up

among us. Thouhast endured persecution, stoning, mocking, insults, cuffs and blows, ridicule and spitting, then the Cross and thenails, the sponge and reed, vinegar and gall, and all the rest that I am unworthy to hear about. Then a spear piercedThy most pure side, and from this wound Thou hast poured forth for us eternal life: Thy precious blood and water.

I hymn Thy birth and her who gave Thee birth: she whom Thou didst preserve a virgin after she gave birth as shewas before she gave birth. I worship Thee in the cave, swaddled in the manger. I glorify Thee, who hast gone downinto Egypt with Thy virginal and most pure Mother; who hast lived in Nazareth in obedience to Thy mortal parents.Thy putative father and Thy true mother. I hymn Thee, baptized in Jordan by John the Forerunner-Thee, Lord, andThy Father who bore witness to Thee, and Thy Holy Spirit who manifested Thee. I hymn Thy baptism and Thy

baptizer John, Thy prophet and Thy servant. I glorify Thee who didst fast for us, who hast voluntarily acceptedtemptation and triumphed over the enemy in the body which Thou didst take from us, giving us victory over him inThy inexpressible wisdom. I glorify Thee as Thou hast lived together with Thy disciples, cleansed lepers, madecripples stand erect, given light to the blind, speech and hearing to the dumb and the deaf; as Thou hast blessed theloaves and walked upon the sea as upon dry land, taught the crowds about the practice of the virtues and aboutcontemplation, proclaimed the Father and the Holy Spirit, foretold the threats and promises to come, and spoken ofall that brings us to salvation. I praise Thee who hast already vanquished the enemy; who dost pull up the passionsby their roots with Thy wise teaching; who dost make fools wise and dost overthrow crafty idiots by thy boundlesswisdom; who dost raise the dead with Thy inexpressible might and dost cast out demons with Thy authority as Godof all. And not only dost Thou do these things in Thy own person, but Thou givest Thy servants the power to doeven greater things (cf. John 14:12), so that we may be still more astonished, as

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Thou Thyself hast said. Great is Thy Name, for through Thee Thy saints perform all their miracles.

Lord Jesus Christ, Son and Logos of God, the most tender name of our salvation, great is Thy glory, great are Thyworks, marvelous are Thy words, 'sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb' (Ps. 19:10). Glory to Thee, 0 Lord,glory to Thee. Who can glorify and hymn Thy coming in the flesh. Thy goodness, power, wisdom. Thy life in thisworld and Thy teaching? And how is it that Thy holy commandments teach us the life of virtue so naturally and soeasily? As Thou didst say. Lord: 'Forgive, and you will be forgiven" (cf. Matt. 6:14); and again: 'Seek and you willfind, knock and it will be opened to you' (Matt. 7:7); and: "Whatever you would that men should do to you, do alsoto them' (Matt. 7:12). Who, having understood Thy commandments and other, sayings, will not be astonished whenhe perceives Thy boundless wisdom? For Thou art the wisdom of God, the life of all, the joy of angels, the ineffablelight, the resurrection of the dead, the good shepherd 'who gives His life for the sheep' (John 10:11)1 hymn Thytransfiguration, crucifixion, burial, resurrection, ascension. Thy enthronement at the right hand of God the Father,the descent of the Holy Spirit and Thy future advent, when Thou wilt come with power and great, incomprehensibleglory.

I grow weak, my Lord, before Thy wonders and, at a loss, I long to take refuge in silence. Yet I do not know whatto do. For if I keep silence, amazement overwhelms me; but if I dare to say something, I am struck dumb and raptaway. I regard myself as unworthy of heaven and earth, and as deserving every punishment, not simply because ofthe sins 1 have committed, but much more because of the blessings I have received without my showing anygratitude, contemptible as I am. For Thou, Lord, who dost transcend all goodness, hast filled my soul with everyblessing. I dimly perceive Thy works and my mind is amazed. Merely to look on what is Thine reduces me to

nothing. Yet the knowledge is not mine, nor the endeavor, for it is Thy grace. Therefore I will lay my hand on mymouth, as Job once did (cf. Job 40:4), and will take refuge in Thy saints, for I am bewildered.

Blessed Queen of the universe, you know that we sinners' have no intimacy with the God whom you have borne.But, putting our trust in you, through your

mediation we your servants prostrate ourselves

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before the Lord: for you can freely approach Him smce He is your son and our God. Thus I, too, unworthybeliever that I am, entreat you, holy Queen, that I may be allowed to perceive the gifts of grace bestowed on you andon the other saints, and to understand how you display so many virtues. Simply your giving birth to the Son of Godshows that you excel all other beings. For He who, as creator of all, knows all things before they come intoexistence, found your womb worthy of His indwellmg. No one can question you about your mysteries, for theytranscend nature, thought and intellect. Rightly do we, who have been saved through you, pure Virgin, confess thatyou are the Mother of God, extolling you with the angelic choirs.' For God, whom men cannot see, on whom theranks of angels do not dare to look, has through you become visible to men as the Logos made flesh. Glorifying Himwith the heavenly hosts we proclaim you blessed. And what shall we call you, who are full of grace? Heaven, foryou have made the Sun of Righteousness shine forth? Paradise, for you have put forth the flower of immortality?Virgin, for you have remained inviolate? Pure mother, for you have held in your holy embrace the God of all?Mother of God, you are the true vine, for you have borne the fruit of life. We entreat you, intercede in your glorywith the apostles and all the saints, that God may have mercy on our souls. For with the true faith we confess thatyou are the Mother of God and we bless you, the ever-blessed. All generations proclaim you blessed as the onlyMother of God, more honored than the cherubim and incomparably more glorious than the seraphim.

Unable to grasp the mysteries of the Mother of God, I marvel at the lives of the other saints, and ask; How did youdwell. Baptist and Forerunner of the Lord, in the desert? What shall we call you, 0 prophet: angel, apostle, martyr?Angel, because you lived as though bodiless; apostle, because you caught the nations in your net; martyr, becauseyou were beheaded for Christ's sake. Pray to Him or the

salvation of our souls. 'The memory of the just is praised",Solomon says (cf. Prov. 10:7. LXX); but the Lord's testimony

suffices you. Forerunner: truly you were proclaimed greater in honor than the prophets, for you were foundworthy to baptize Him whom they prophesied.

Holy apostles and disciples of the Savior, eyewitnesses of His mysteries, you have proclaimed Him whom nonecan contemplate and who has no origin, saying, 'In the beginning was the Logos' (John 1:1). You were not createdbefore the angels, nor did you learn this from men, but from the wisdom that is from above. We beseech you, then,since you have communion with God, intercede for our souls. I marvel at your love of God. It is as the ancienttroparia say: 'Lord, because the apostles truly longed for Thee on earth, they considered all things to be dung, so thatthey might gain Thee alone (cf. Phil. 3:8). For Thee they gave their bodies over to torture and, glorified because ofthis, they intercede for our souls.' How is it that, being men, as we are, and wearing flesh of clay, you displayedsuch virtues, so that you even endured death for the sake of those who slew you? How, few though you were, didyou conquer the whole world? How, though simple and unlettered, did you overcome kings and rulers? How, thoughunarmed, naked and poor, enclosed in weak flesh, did you defeat the invisible demons? And what was the greatstrength, or rather faith, which enabled you to receive the power of the Holy Spirit-you and the holy martyrs whofought the good fight and received their crowns? Apostles, martyrs, prophets, hierarchs, holy men, we beseech youto intercede with Christ so that in His goodness He will save our souls.

Who is not astounded when he sees, 0 holy martyrs, the good fight that you fought? Being in the body youconquered the bodiless enemy, confessing Christ and armed with the Cross. In this way justly you were revealed tobe expellers of demons and enemies of barbaric powers. Intercede unceasingly for the salvation

of our souls. For,like the three children in the fiery furnace, you did not endure your trials in the hope of a reward, but out of love forGod, as you yourselves have declared: "For even if He does not deliver us, yet we will not for that reason deny Himas one who does not save" (cf. Dan. 3:17-18). I marvel at your extreme humility, holy children, for even though you

were surrounded by flames, you declared that you did not know how to give thanks to God. There is at this time noprince, prophet, leader or burnt offering", you said,"... but because we come with a contrite heart and humble spirit,accept us" (Song of the Three Children, verses 15-16). I marvel at the power of God that has filled you, and that alsofilled Elijah the prophet: as St John of Damaskos has said: 'Out of the Same hast Thou made dew fall upon Thy

saints (cf. Song of the Three Children, verse 27), and hast burnt up with water the sacrifice of the Righteous One (cf.1 Kgs. 18:58). For Thou doest all things, 0 Christ, simply by Thy will alone/ Yet which shall I contemplate first?The testimonies found in the Gospel, or the Acts of the Apostles? The contests of the martyrs, or the struggles of theholy fathers, or of the saints ancient and recent, both men and women? Their lives and sayings, or their power ofinterpretation and discernment? I am at a loss and stand amazed.

But I pray Thee, compassionate Lord, do not allow me to be condemned because of the unworthy and ungratefulmanner in which I contemplate the great mysteries that Thou hast revealed to Thy saints and through them to me, asinner and Thy unworthy servant. For see. Lord, Thy servant stands before Thee, idle in everything, speechless, asone who is dead; and I do not dare to say anything more or presumptuously to contemplate further. But as always 1fall down before Thee, crying from the depths of my soul and saying, 'Master, rich in mercy. Lord Jesus Christ...'and the rest of the prayer. (Here you should meditate on the second prayer and the psalms, watching over theconduct of your soul and body,

so that you develop a disposition receptive to divine thoughts. Then you will be ablewith full consciousness to understand all the mysteries and miracles hidden within the Holy Scriptures. Astounded inthis way at God's gifts, you will come to love Him alone and to suffer for His sake with joy, as all the saints havedone. For the Holy Scriptures are full of astonishing things, as Solomon says.)

Along with the other marvels, I wonder at God's power as it was manifest in the manna. For the manna did notpreserve the same form until the following day, but dissolved and was found to be full of

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worms (cf. Exod. 16:20). This was to prevent those who lacked faith from concerning themselves about the nextday. But in the pitcher that was in the tabernacle it remained unchanged (cf. Exod. 16:32-34). Again, when cookedwith fire the manna was not burnt; yet it dissolved at the faintest ray of sunlight, so that the greedy should not collectmore than they needed to keep alive. How marvelously God works everywhere for the salvation of men, as the Lordsays with regard to divine providence: "My Father goes on working and I work too' (John 5:17). He who reverentlymeditates on this is outwardly taught by the Holy Scriptures, and inwardly by divine providence. He begins to seethings as they are in their true nature, as St Gregory of Nyssa and St John of Damaskos say. He is no longerdeceived by the exterior attractiveness of the things of this world, such as physical beauty, wealth, transient gloryand so on; nor is he seduced by the shadows they cast, as are those still subject to the passions.

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Through the fifth stage of contemplation, that called 'counsel' by the prophet (cf. Isa. 11:2), one comes tounderstand, as the final Beatitude indicates, the

changeable nature of visible created things: how they derive fromthe earth and return again to the earth, thus confirming the words of Ecclesiastes: 'Vanity of vanities; all, is vanity'(Eccles. 1:2). St John of Damaskos says the same thing: 'All human affairs, all that does not exist after death, arevanity. Riches vanish, glory leaves us. When death comes, all such things disappear." And again. Truly all things arevanity; life is but a shadow and a dream, and every man bom of the earth troubles himself in vain, as the Scripturessay (cf. Ps. 39:6. LXX). By the time we have gained the whole world we shall be in the grave, where king andpauper are one.

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When a person has acquired the habit of detachment, then he is granted access to the sixth stage of contemplation,that known as 'strength" (cf. Isa. 11:2). At this stage one begins to look without passion on the beauty of createdthings.

There are three categories of thought: human, demonic, and angelic. Human thought consists in the abstractconception, arising in the heart, of some created thing, such as a man, or gold, or some other sensible object.Demonic thought consists in a conceptual image compounded with passion. One thinks, for example, of a humanbeing, but this thought is accompanied by mindless affection, that is to say, by the desire for a relationship notblessed by God but involving unchastity; or else it is accompanied by unreasoning hatred, that is to say, by rancor orspite. Again, one thinks of gold avariciously or with the intention of stealing or seizing it; or else one is roused tohatred and blasphemy against God's works, thus causing one's own perdition. For if we do not love things as theyshould be loved, but love them more than we love God, then we are no different from idolaters, as St Maximos says.But if, on the other hand, we hate and despise things, failing to perceive that they were created 'wholly good andbeautiful" (Gen. 1:31), we provoke the anger of God.

Angelic thought, finally, consists in the dispassionate contemplation of things, which is spiritual knowledgeproper. It is the mid-point between two precipices, protecting the intellect and enabling it to distinguish between itstrue goal and the six diabolic pitfalls that threaten it. These pitfalls lie above and below, to the

right and left, and onthe near side and on the far side of the intellect's true goal. Thus spiritual knowledge proper stands as though at thecentre, surrounded by these pitfalls. It is the knowledge taught by those earthly angels who have made themselves

dead to the world, so that their inteUect has grown dispassionate arid hence sees things as it[V3] 135

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should. In this way, the intellect does not go above its true goal out of pride or self-esteem, thinking it understandsthings merely through its own power of thought; nor does it fall below its true goal, prevented by ignorance fromattaining perfection. It does not veer to the right through rejecting and hating created things, or to the left throughmindless affection for them and attachment to them. It does not remain on the near side of its true goal because of itsutter ignorance and sloth, nor trespass on its far side, lured by the spirit of meddlesomeness and senseless curiositythat arises from contempt or maliciousness. Rather, it accepts spiritual knowledge with patience, humility and thehope that is bom of a deep faith. In this way, through its partial knowledge of things the intellect is led upwardstowards divine love. But, even though it possesses some knowledge, it is aware that it is still ignorant; and thisawareness keeps it in a state of humility. Thus through persistent hope and faith it reaches its goal, neither hatinganything completely as evil, or loving anything beyond measure.

We should look on man with wonder, conscious that his intellect, being infinite, is the image of the invisible God;and that even if it is for a time limited by the body, as St Basil says, it can embrace all form, just as God'sprovidence embraces the whole universe. For the intellect has the ability to transform itself into everything, and isdyed with the form of the object it apprehends. But when it is taken up into God, who is formless and miageless, itbecomes formless and imageless itself. Then we should marvel at how the intellect can preserve any thought or idea,and how an earlier thought need not be modified by later thoughts, or a later thought injured by earlier ones. On thecontrary, the mind like a treasure-house tirelessly stores all thoughts. And these thoughts, whether new or long heldin store, the intellect when it wishes can express in language; yet

although words are always coming from it, it isnever exhausted.

When we come to consider the body, we should marvel at the way in which eyes, ears and tongue are usedexternally according to the soul's wish, eyes through the medium of light, and ears and tongue through the mediumof air; and how no one sense impedes any of the others or can do anything the soul does not intend. We shouldmarvel, too, at how the body, that is not its own animating principle, is, at God's command, commixed with thenoetic and deifonn soul.

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created by the Holy Spirit breathing hfe into it (cf Gen. 2:7), as St John of Damaskos says. Yet it is wrong tothink, as some do, that the soul is an emanation from the supraessential Godhead, for this is impossible. As St JohnChrysostom says, 'In order to prevent the human intellect from thinking that it is God, God has subjected it toignorance and forgetfulness, so that in this way it may acquire humility." He also says that the Creator willed thatthere should be a separation in this natural intermixture of soul and body. The deiform soul, as St John Klimakossays, either ascends upward to heaven, or goes downward to Hades, while the earthly body returns to the earth fromwhich it was taken. But through the grace of our Savior Jesus Christ these two separated elements are once morejoined together at His second coming, so that each of us may receive the due reward for his works. Who can graspbut an inkling of this mystery without being astonished? God raises man again from the earth after he has committedso many terrible crimes, despising the divine commandments, and He bestows on man the same immortality that hepossessed originally, even though man has disobeyed the commandment which preserves him from death andcorruption, and in his arrogance has drawn death upon himself.

Enlightened spiritually through angelic inspiration, man marvels at these and many other things concerninghuman nature. Again, he contemplates the beauty and use of gold, and marvels at how such a thing has come out ofthe earth for our sake, so that the weak may distribute their wealth in acts of charity, while those unwilling toexercise such charity are helped to do so by various unsought

trials which, so long as they are thankfully accepted,lead to salvation. Thus both groups are saved. Those, however, who choose to shed all their possessions will becrowned with glory, for-like those who live in virginity-they accomplish what transcends nature. In so far as gold isa perishable and earthly thing, it is not to be preferred to the commandments of God; yet as something created byGod and useful for bodily life and for salvation, it deserves, not our hatred, but our love and self-control.

By thus contemplating dispassionately the beauty and use of each thing, he who is illumined is filled with love forthe Creator, He surveys all visible things in the upper and lower worlds: the sky, the

sun, the moon, stars and clouds, water-spouts and rain, snow and hail, how in great heat liquids coagulate,thunder, lightning, the winds and breezes and the way they change, the seasons, the years, the days, the nights, thehours, the minutes, the earth, the sea, the countless flocks, the four-legged animals, the wild beasts and reptiles, allthe kinds of bird, the springs and rivers, the many varieties of plant and herb, both wild and cultivated. He sees in allthings the order, the equilibrium, the proportion, the beauty, the rhythm, the union, the harmony, the usefulness, theconcordance, the variety, the delightfulness, the stability, the motion, the colors, the shapes, the forms, the reversionof things to their source, permanence in the midst of corruption.

Contemplating thus all created realities, he is filled with wonder. He marvels how the Creator by a simplecommand brought the four elements forth out of nothing; how, by virtue of His wisdom, opposites do not destroyone another; and how out of the four elements God made all things for our sake. Yet, as St Gregory the Theologiansays, these things are insignificant in comparison with Christ's incarnation and with the blessings to come. Heperceives, too, how God's goodness and wisdom. His strength and forethought, which are concealed in createdthings, are brought to light by man's artistic powers. It is as God Himself said to job (cf Job 12:13). Similarly hesees how by means of words and letters-

through fragments of inanimate ink-God has revealed such great mysteriesto us in the Holy Scriptures; and how, even more wonderfully, the holy prophets and apostles gained such blessingsthrough their great labor and love of God, while we can learn about these matters simply by reading. For, inspired bythe Logos, the Scriptures speak to us of the most astonishing things.

Whoever is aware of all this recognizes that there is nothing incidental or evil in creation, and that even what takesplace against God's will is miraculously changed by God into something good. For example, the fall of the devil wasnot God's will, yet it has been turned to the advantage of those being saved. For the devil is permitted to tempt theelect - according to the strength of each, as St Isaac says - so that he may be mocked and, with God's help, defeatedby them. And these people, who have achieved equality with the

angels, include not wily men, but also great numbers of women. Because of their patient endurance and faith inthe divine Judge they receive, by His grace and compassion, crowns of immortality: for God has defeated andcontinues to defeat the murderous and insolent snake.

The person who has received the grace of spiritual knowledge knows that all things are 'wholly good andbeautiful' (Gen. 1:31); but he who possesses only the first glimmerings of such knowledge should recognize in allhumility that he is ignorant and, as St John Chrysostom advises, he should admit on every occasion, 'I do not know'.For, as Chrysostom says, 'if someone asserts that the height of the sky is such and such, and I say that I do not

know, at least I have told the truth, whereas the other person is deceived into thinking that he knows while in fact hedoes not know, as St Paul says' (cf 1 Cor. 8:2). It is on this account that with firm faith and by questioning thosewith experience we should accept the doctrines of the Church and the decisions of its teachers, both concerning theHoly Scriptures and concerning the sensible and spiritual worlds. Otherwise we may quickly fall because we walkaccording to our own understanding, as St Dorotheos puts it. We should admit our own ignorance in all things, sothat by searching and with distrust in our own opinions

we may aspire to learn and, at a loss in spite of greatknowledge, may realize our own ignorance through recognizing the infinite wisdom of God.

The intellect, being spiritual, is capable of every spiritual perception when it purifies itself for God, according toSt Gregory the Theologian. Yet we should regard such knowledge with the greatest apprehension, lest there behidden in our soul a single evil doctrine able to destroy it without our committing any other sin, as St Basil the Greatsays. For this reason we should not try, through contempt or arrogant zeal, to attain this kind of contemplativeknowledge prematurely; rather we should practice the commandments of Christ in due order and proceedundistracted through the various stages of contemplation previously discussed. Once we have purified the soulthrough patient endurance and with tears of fear and inward grief, and have reached the state of seeing the truenature of things, then - initiated spiritually by the angels - the intellect spontaneously attains this contemplativeknowledge.

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But if a person is presumptuous and tries to reach the second stage before having reached the first, then not onlywill he fail to conform to God's purpose, but he will provoke many battles against himself, particularly throughspeculating about the nature of man, as we have learnt in the case of Adam. Those still subject to the passions gainnothing by attempting to act or think as if they were dispassionate: solid food is not good for babies, even though itis excellent for the mature (cf. Heb. 5:14). Rather they should exercise discrimination, yearning to act and think likethe dispassionate, but holding back, as being unworthy. Yet when grace comes they should not reject it out ofdespair or laziness, neither should they presumptuously demand something prematurely, lest by seeking what has itsproper time before that time has come, as St John Klimakos says, they fail to attain it in its proper time, and fall intodelusion, perhaps beyond the help of man or the Scriptures.

If a person's purpose is fixed in God with all humility and he patiently endures the trials that come upon him, Godwill resolve for him any question that

perplexes him and perhaps even leads him into delusion. Then, greatlyashamed but full of joy, he turns back, seeking the path of the fathers. For, as St John Klimakos states, we shouldregard what happens according to God's will, and nothing else, as coming from grace for our good, even though in

itself it is not very good. Without such patience and humihty a person will suffer what many have suffered,perishing in their stupidity, trusting to their own opinions and thinking they can get along very well without either aguide or the experience that comes from patience and humility. For experience transcends tribulation, trials, andeven active warfare. Should a person of experience be subject to some slight attack on the part of the demons, thistrial will be a source of great joy and profit to him; for it is permitted by God so that he may gain yet furtherexperience and courage in facing his enemies.

The signs that he has done this are tears, contrition of soul before God, flight into stillness and patient recourse toGod, a diligent enquiry into the Scriptures and a desire, based on faith, to accomplish God's purpose. When, on theother hand, a person lacks patience and humility, the signs of this are doubt with regard to God's help, beingashamed to ask questions humbly, avoidance of Stillness and the

reading of Scripture, a love of distraction and of human company, with the idea - entirely misguided - that one willattain a state of repose in this way. On the contrary, it is now that the passions find an opportunity to put down roots,and that trials and temptations grow stronger, while one's own pusillanimity, ingratitude and listlessness waxbecause of one's aboundmg ignorance.

The trials imposed by spiritual fathers in order to discipline and instruct their spiritual children are one thing; butthe trials brought on by our enemies for our destruction are another. This is especially true when we are deluded bypride; for "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble' (cf Jas. 4:6; Prov. 3:34. LXX). Every tribulationthat we accept patiently is good and profitable; but if we do not accept it patiently, it drives us away from God andserves no useful purpose. When this happens, there is only one cure-humility. The humble man

censures and blameshimself and no one else when he suffers affliction. Consequently, he patiently awaits for God to release him, andwhen this happens he rejoices and gratefully endures whatever comes; and through his experience of these things hegains spiritual knowledge. Recognizing his own ignorance and weakness, he seeks diligently for the Physician and,seeking, he finds Him, as Christ himself has said (cf. Matt. 7:8). Having found God, he longs for Him; and the morehe longs, the more God longs for him. Then, purifying himself as much as he can, he struggles to make room inhimself for the Beloved for whom he longs. And the Beloved for whom he longs, finding room for Himself in thisman, takes up His abode there, as the Gerontikon says. Dwelling there. He protects His home, and fills it with light.And the person thus filled with light knows and, knowing, he is known, as St John of Damaskos says.

In all this, and in what has been said above, one should keep a proper order, and one should work on whatever oneunderstands. For what one cannot understand one should give silent thanks, as St Isaac says, but should not

presumptuously assume that one has understood it. And St Isaac, borrowing his words from Sirach, also says:'When you find honey, eat moderately, lest by over-inducing you make yourself sick" (cf. Prov. 25:16). As StGregory the Theologian says, 'Uncontrolled contemplation may well push us

over the edge, when we seek for what is beyond our strength and are unwilling to say, "God knows this; but whoam I?"' And as St Basil observes, we must believe that He who made the mountains and the great sea-monsters hasalso hollowed out the sting of the bee.

Thus he who is strong enough-to attain understanding apprehends the spiritual from the sensible, and the invisibleand eternal from what is visible and transient. Having grasped, through grace, a knowledge of the higher powers, hesees that a single righteous man is worth more than the whole world. "Consider how many tongues and nations therighteous man excels", says St John Chrysostom. "Yet an angel is greater than man, and the vision of a single angelis enough to fill us with astonishment. Remember what happened to Daniel, the equal of the angels,

when he saw theangel" (cf Dan. 10:5-21).

St Peter of Damaskos

BooklA Treasury of Divine Knowledge

The Seventh Stage of Contemplation

A person given grace to attain the seventh stage of contemplation marvels at the multitude of incorporeal powers:authorities, thrones, dominions, seraphim and cherabim, the nine orders mentioned in all the divine Scriptures,whose nature, power and other good qualities, as well as their hierarchical disposition, are known to God theirCreator. But the heavenly hosts have also other ranks, about which St John Chrysostom speaks. He says that theWords "Lord of Sabaoth' mean 'Lord of the celestial powers', and that these powers transmit illumination to oneanother. The angels, he says, illumine man, while they in turn are illumined by the archangels; these are illuminedby the principalities. Thus each order receives illumination and knowledge from another. He also tells us thathumankind constitutes as it were but a single sheep, lost not by God but through its own choice, and that the ninety-nine other sheep are the orders of angels (cf. Matt. 18:12-14).

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The Seventh Stage of Contemplation

Considering the wisdom and power of the Creator and how He has produced such multiple states of being simplyby summoning them into existence, St Gregory the Theologian says that God conceived first the angelic powers andthen the states sequent to them. As St Isaac says, on passing spiritually beyond the threshold-that is to say, beyondthe veil of the temple-one becomes immaterial. The outer part of the temple represents this world; the veil or thethreshold represents the firmament of heaven; the holy of holies represents the supracosmic realm where thebodiless and immaterial powers ceaselessly hymn God and intercede for us, as St Athanasios the Great says. In thatrealm one's thoughts are at peace and one becomes a son of God by grace, initiated into

the mysteries hidden in theHoly Scriptures, as St John of Damaskos puts it: "The divine veil of the temple was rent by the Cross of the Creator,revealing to the faithful the truth concealed beneath the literal sense of Scripture; and they cry: God of our fathers,blessed art Thou.' As St Kosmas the Hymnographer says, 'When the first man tasted the tree, he was commutedwith corruption: cast out ignobly from life and with a body subject to corruption, he passed on this punishment to allmankind. But we, the earth-bom, restored through the wood of the Cross, cry aloud: Blessed art Thou and praisedabove all for ever.'

St Peter of Damaskos

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The Eighth Stage of Contemplation

Through the eighth stage of contemplation we are led upwards to the vision of what pertains to God by means ofthe second kind of prayer, the pure prayer proper to the contemplative. In it the mtellect is seized during thetransport of prayer by a divine longing, and it no longer knows anything at all of this world, as both St Maximos"and St John of Damaskos confirm. Not only does the intellect forget all things, but it forgets itself as well. Evagriossays that so long as the

intellect is still conscious of itself, it abides, not in God alone, but also in itself. According to St Maximos, it isonly when it abides in God alone that it is granted direct vision of what pertains to God and, through the indwellingof the Holy Spirit, becomes m the true sense a theologian.

In our ignorance, however, we should not identify God in Himself with His divine attributes, such as Hisgoodness, bountifulness, justice, holiness, light, fire,

being, nature, power, wisdom and the others of which StDionysios the Areopagite speaks. God in Himself is not among any of the things that the intellect is capable ofdefining, for He is undetermined and undeterminable. In theology we can speak about the attributes of God but notabout God in Himself, as St Dionysios explains to St Timothy, invoking St Hierotheos as witness. It is indeed morecorrect to speak of God in Himself as inscrutable, unsearchable, inexplicable, as all that it is impossible to define.For He is beyond intellection and thought, and is known only to Himself, one God in three hypostases, unoriginate,unending, beyond goodness, above all praise. All that is said of God in divine Scripture is said with this sense of ourinadequacy, that though we may know that God is, we cannot know what He is; for in Himself He isincomprehensible to every being endowed with intellect and reason.

The same applies to the incarnation of the Son of God and to the hypostatic union, as St Cyril says. We can onlymarvel at the way in which the flesh He assumed from us is taken up into His divinity, as St Basil the Great puts it.The union is like that of fire and iron, and it is on this model that we are to conceive of the two natures in the singleperson of Christ. As St John of Damaskos says in his hymn to the Mother of God: "0 most holy Lady, you havegiven birth to the incarnate God as one hypostasis in two natures; and to Him we all sing: Blessed art Thou, 0 God.'And again: 'Without changing. He who is beyond determination was in you, all-holy Lady, united hypostatically toour flesh; for He is compassionate and He alone is blessed."

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That There Are No Contradictions in Holy Scripture

Whenever a person even slightly lUummed reads the Scriptures or sings psalms he finds in them matter forcontemplation and theology, one text supporting another. But he whose intellect is still unenlightened thinks that theHoly Scriptures are contradictory. Yet there is no contradiction in the Holy Scriptures: God forbid that there shouldbe. For some texts are confirmed by others, while some were written with reference to a particular time or a

particular person. Thus every word of Scripture is beyond reproach. The

appearance of contradiction is due to ourignorance. We ought not to find fault with the Scriptures, but to the limit of our capacity we should attend to them asthey are, and not as we would like them to be, after the manner of the Greeks and Jews. For the Greeks and Jewsrefused to admit that they did not understand, but out of conceit and self- satisfaction they found fault with theScriptures and with the natural order of things, and interpreted them as they saw fit and not according to the will ofGod. As a result they were led into delusion and gave themselves over to every kind of evil.

The person who searches for the meaning of the Scriptures will not put forward his own opinion, bad or good; but,as St Basil the Great and St John Chrysostom have said, he will take as his teacher, not the learning of this world,but Holy Scripture itself. Then if his heart is pure and God puts something unpremeditated into it, he will accept it,providing he can find confirmation for it in the Scriptures, as St Antony the Great says. For St Isaac says that thethoughts that enter spontaneously and without premeditation into the intellects of those pursuing a life of stillnessare to be accepted; but that to investigate and then to draw one's own conclusions is an act of self-will and results inmaterial knowledge.

This is especially the case if a person does not approach the Scriptures through the door of humility but, as St JohnChrysostom says, climbs up some other way, like a thief (cf John 10:1), and forces them to accord with hisallegorizing. For no one is more

foolish than he who forces the meaning of the Scriptures or finds fault with them so as to demonstrate his ownknowledge-or, rather, his own ignorance. What kind of knowledge can result from adapting the meaning of theScriptures to suit one's own likes and from daring to alter their words? The true sage is he who regards the text asauthoritative and discovers, through the wisdom of the Spirit, the hidden mysteries to which the divine Scripturesbear witness.

The three great luminaries, St Basil the Great, St Gregory the Theologian and St John Chrysostom, areoutstanding examples of this: they base themselves either on the particular text they are considering or on someother passage of Scripture. Thus no one can contradict them, for they do not adduce external support for what theysay, so that it might be claimed that it was merely their own opinion, but refer directly to the text under discussion orto some other scriptural passage that sheds light on it. And in this they are right; for what they understand andexpound comes from the Holy Spirit, of whose inspiration they have been found worthy. No one, therefore, shoulddo or mentally assent to anything if its integrity is in doubt and cannot be attested from Scripture. For what is thepoint of rejecting something whose integrity Scripture clearly attests as being in accordance with God's will, inorder to do something else, whether good or not? Only passion could provoke such behavior.

St Peter of Damaskos

BooklA Treasury of Divine KnowledgeThe Classification of Prayer According to the Eight Stages of Contemplation

Where the first four of the eight stages of contemplation are concerned, we should say the traditional writtenprayers daily; where the last four are concerned, like St Philimon we should continuously utter the words "Lord,have mercy", keeping our intellect completely free from thoughts." Those who are advanced on the spiritual wayshould direct their intellect now to the contemplation of sensible

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BooklA Treasury of Divine KnowledgeThe Classification of Prayer According to the Eight Stages of Contemplation

realities, and now to the cognition of intelligible realities and to that which is formless; now to the meaning ofsome passage of the Scriptures, and now to pure prayer. On the bodily level they should engage sometimes inreading, sometmies m prayer, sometimes in shedding tears over their own state or, out "of divinely-inspiredsympathy, on behalf of others; or they should undertake some task in order to assist someone unwell either mentallyor physically.

Thus at all times they will fulfill the work of the angels, never concerning themselves with the thmgs of thisworld. For God, who has chosen them, who has set them apart to be His companions, and has granted them this wayof life and this freedom from anxiety, will Himself look after them and nourish them in soul and body: "Cast yourburden upon the Lord, and He will nourish you" (Ps. 55:22. LXX). The more they place their hope in the Lord withregard to all things that concern them, whether of soul or body, the more they will find that the Lord provides forthem. In the end they will regard themselves as lower than all other creatures because of God's many gifts, visibleand invisible, bestowed on both soul and body. So great grows their debt that they cannot feel proud about anythingbecause of their shame at God's generosity. The more they give thanks to Him and try forcibly to exert themselvesfor the sake of His love, the more God draws near to them through His gifts and longs to fill them with peace,making them value stillness and voluntary poverty more than all the kingdoms of this earth, without even takingaccount of any reward in the world to come.

The holy martyrs suffered when tormented by their enemies, but their longing for the kingdom and their love ofGod conquered the pain. They even regarded the strength they were given to overcome their enemies as a furthergreat blessing that added to their debts. As a result, when found worthy of enduring death for Christ's sake, they hadin many cases lost all sense of pain. In the same way the holy fathers at first exerted themselves forcibly in manyforms of asceticism, as well as in their warfare against the spirits of evil; but their longing and aspiration for the state

of dispassion was triumphant.

After his struggles the person who attains the state of dispassion is relieved of all worry and anxiety, because hehas-conquered the passions. A person still subject to the passions may also think that all is well, but he does somerely because of his blindness. It is only the spiritual contestant who wants to conquer the passions but finds he

to the Eight Stages of Contemplation

cannot do so that suffers tribulation and warfare. Sometimes God allows a person in this situation to be defeatedby his enemies so that he may acquire humility. On account of this he ought to recognize his own weakness and fleevigorously from what harms him, so that he forgets his former habits. For if one does not drat See from distractionand acquire complete quietude, one wiH never be dispassionate with regard to anything, or be able always to saywhat is right and good. In short, this total flight from distraction is of prime importance in all things, if one is not tobe dragged back by one's former habits. But let no one, on hearing about humility, dispassion and other such things,think in his ignorance that he possesses them. He should search for the signs of these things in himself and see if hecan find them.

St Peter of Damaskos

BooklA Treasury of Divine KnowledgeHumility

The following are the signs of humility: when possessing every virtue of body and soul, to consider oneself to bethe more a debtor to God because, though unworthy, one has received so much by grace; when tried or tempted bythe demons or by men, to regard oneself as deserving such things - and much more - so that a small part of one'sdebt may be taken away and one may find some mitigation of the punishment one expects on the day of judgment;when not suffering any such trial, to be extremely troubled and afflicted, and to look for some way in which to exertoneself more forcibly; on achieving this, again to take it as a gift from God and so to humble oneself further; and,not discovering anything to give God in return, to continue to labor and to consider oneself to be all the more adebtor.

St Peter of Damaskos

BooklA Treasury of Divine KnowledgeDispassion

This, surely, is the sign of dispassion; to remain calm and fearless in all things because one has received by God'sgrace the strength to do anything, as St Paul puts it (cf Phil.4:13). Such a person is totally unconcerned about hismaterial life, but exerts himself in ascetic labors as forcibly as he can, and so attains a state of repose. Full of

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thanksgiving, he exerts himself still more forcibly, thus finding himself always engaged in battle and triumphingwith the help of humility. It is by this means that a person advances; for, as St Isaac says, things accomplishedwithout forcefulness are not works but gifts of God. If one were to find repose after one's first efforts, it would bethe prize of defeat and not a reason for boasting. It is not those who receive a reward who are to be praised, but thosewho exert themselves forcibly in their labors and who receive nothing.

What can we say? The more we act and the more we give thanks to our Benefactor, the more we are His debtors;for He is without need and wants nothing, while without Him we are not able to do anything good (cf John 15:5).The person found worthy of praising God gains more by it than God, for he has received a great and marvelous giftof grace. The more he praises God, the more he becomes a debtor, until finally he finds no limit or interruption to hisknowledge of God or to thanksgiving or humilits- or love. For these things belong, not to this world - which wouldmean that they had an end - but to that eternal world which does not have an end and in which there is on thecontrary an increase in knowledge and in gifts of grace. He who in thought and practice is found worthy of thatworld is freed from all the passions.

In order to attain all this we must focus our attention on God, have no concern for this world, and must not-bedismayed by any trial or temptation. Starting from this world, we must continually advance, ascending to a higherlevel of reality. We should not be distracted by anything: neither by dreams, whether evil or seemingly good, nor bythe thought of anything, whether good or bad, nor by distress or deceitful joy, 'nor by self-conceit or despair, nor bydepression or elation, nor by a sense of abandonment or by illusory help and strength, nor by negligence or progress,nor by laziness or seeming zeal, nor by apparent dispassion or passionate attachment. Rather with humility weshould strive to maintain a state of stillness, free from all distraction, knowing that no one can do us harm unless we

ourselves wish for it.

Because of our conceit and our failure constantly to have recourse to God, we should cast ourselves down beforeHim, asking that His will should be done in all things and saynig to every thought that comes to us: I do not knowwho you are; God knows if you are good or not; for I have thrown myself, as I shall continue to throw myself.

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BooklA Treasury of Divine KnowledgeDispassion

into His hands, and He looks after me (cf. 1 Pet. 5:7). For just as He created me out of what was not, so it is withinHis power to save me by His grace if He so chooses. May His holy will be done in this world and in the next, as Hewishes and when He wishes. I have no will of my own. I know but one thing: that, though I have sinned greatly, Ireceive great blessings; and yet I do not even thank God for His goodness through my actions and my thoughts, sofar as it is in my power to do so. In spite of this He is able and willing to save all men, myself included, as Hewishes. How do I know, being a man, whether He wants me to be this or that? Thus, through fear of sinning, I havefled to this stillness; and because of my sins and my many weaknesses I sit doing nothing in my cell, like a prisoner,awaiting the Lord's decision.

Yet even if we see that we are doing nothing and are altogether lost, let us not be afraid; for if we do not leave ourcell, we will learn contrition of soul and will shed heartfelt tears. But again, should we find ourselves eager toundertake spiritual labors and should we be granted such tears, let us not rejoice over this but be on our guardagainst fraud and prepare ourselves for war.

In short, we should be detached from all things, whether good or bad, so that nothing perturbs us and we reach astate of stillness, struggling as much as we can and, if we have someone to advise us, doing what we are told to do.If we do not have anyone to advise us, we should take Christ as our counselor, asking Him with humility andthrough pure heartfelt prayer about every thought and undertaking. Let us not presume that we are fully-testedmonks until we have encountered Christ in the world to be, as Abba Agathon and St John Klimakos tell us. If oursole purpose is to do God's will, God Himself will teach us what it

is, assuring us of it either directly, through theintellect, or by means of some person or of Scripture. And if for God's sake we amputate our own will. God willenable us to reach, with inexpressible joy, a perfection that we have never known; and when we experience this wewill be filled with wonder at seeing how joy and spiritual knowledge begin to pour forth from everywhere. We willderive some profit from everything and God will reign in us, since we have no will of our own, but have submittedourselves to the holy will of God. We become like-kings, so that whatever we desire we receive effortlessly andspeedily from God, who has us in His care.

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BooklA Treasury of Divine KnowledgeA Further Analysis of the Seven Forms of Bodily Discipline

This is the faith with which the Lord said it is possible to move mountains (cf Matt 21:21); upon it, according toSt Paul (cf. Col 1:23), the other virtues are founded. For this reason the enemy does everything he can to disrupt ourstate of stillness and make us fall into temptation. And if he finds us in some way lacking in faith, wholly or partiallytrusting in our own strength and judgment, he takes advantage of this to overcome us and to take us captive, pitifulas we are. Once we have truly grasped this, we will, abandon all the delights and comforts of this world, and willfree ourselves as fast as possible from its preoccupations and anxieties. We will do this either through the way ofobedience, setting our spiritual father in the place of Christ and referring every idea, thought and action to him, sothat we have nothing we can call our own; or by following the path of stillness in resolute faith, fleeing from allthings.

Then for us Christ takes the place of all things and becomes all things for us, in this world and in the world tocome, as St John Chrysostom and St John of Damaskos say. Christ feeds us, clothes us, brings us joy, encourages us,gladdens us, gives us rest, teaches and enlightens us. In short, Christ cares for us as He cared for His disciples; andeven if we do not have to toil as they did, yet we have their firmness of faith, which frees us from the self-concernthat dominates other people. Like the apostles in their fear of the Jews, we sit in our cells out of fear of the spirits ofevil, and we await our Teacher. We await Him so that through contemplation in the full sense, or through thespiritual knowledge of His

creatures, we may be helped to rise noetically from the passions and be given peace, ashappened according to St Maximos to the apostles when the doors were closed (cf. John 20:19).

St Peter of Damaskos

BooklA Treasury of Divine KnowledgeA Further Analysis of the Seven Forms of Bodily Discipline

We should always carry out what was said at the beginning of this work with regard to the seven forms of bodilyand moral discipline, not doing either more or less than was recommended there.

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BooklA Treasury of Divine KnowledgeA Further Analysis of the Seven Forms of Bodily Discipline

Exceptions may be if a person is too young to engage in bodily warfare, or if he possesses excessive bodilystrength which requires a correspondingly severe degree of discipline. Again, exceptions may be made in cases ofbodily frailty: here a certain relaxation can be allowed, but not a total suspension of discipline, for this according toSt Isaac can harm even the dispassionate. The relaxation must be no more than is necessary as a remedy for thesickness; then the soul will not take it as an excuse for slackening its own exertions. This is the right course when aperson desperately wants some relaxation. Yet such relaxation, they say, can be dangerous for the young and thehealthy.

The holy fathers St Basil and St Maximos state that, to relieve hunger and thirst, only bread and water are needed,while for health and bodily strength we require other foods that God in His compassion has given us. But so that theconstant eating of the same thing does not produce a feeling of revulsion in the sick person, he should eat differentfoods, one at a time, as already said. It is abstention and dissipation that bring on illness, while self-control and achange of foods each day are conducive to health. The body then remains impervious to pleasure and sickness, andco-operates in the acquisition of the virtues.

As has been said, all this is intended for those who are still engaged in the

struggle for purification. As for thosewho have attained the state of dispassion, they often do not eat for days on end, since they have become like childrenin their devotion to Christ and forget about their bodies. St Sisois was such a person: in the ecstasy of his love forGod he asked to take communion after he had eaten. As St Paul said for the good of us all, 'If we go out of ourselvesin ecstasy, it is for God; if we are restrained, it is foryour sake' (2 Cor. 5:13). Among others, St Basil the Great hasalso spoken of these things. Certain people in this state, even after eating plentifully, have not been aware of it: it isas if they had eaten nothing. For their intellect is not in the body, and so is not aware of the body's ease or its pain.

This is clear from many of the fathers and holy martyrs, as well as from the saint whom Evagrios described. Acertain elder living in the desert, he tells us, used to pray noetically; and it happened - for his benefit as well as forthat of many others - that God permitted the

demons to seize him hand and foot and fling him down from a high place; yet so that he would not be harmed byfalling from such a height, they would catch him on a rush-mat. This they did for some time, trying to see if hisintellect would descend from the heavens; but they were not able to make it do so. 'When would such a man be

aware of food or drink or of anything bodily? Or take the case of St Ephrem: after he had conquered all the passionsof soul and body by the grace of Christ, he asked in his immense humility that the gift of dispassion might be takenaway from him, so that he would not fail into idleness and be condemned because he no longer had to fight theenemy. St John Khmakos was amazed at this and wrote that there are some, like St Ephrem, who are moredispassionate than those who have attained the state of dispassion.

Discrimination

We therefore need discrimination in all things so that we may rightly assess every form of action. For him whopossesses it, discrimination is a light illuminating the right moment, the proposed action, the form it takes, strength,knowledge, maturity, capacity, weakness, resolution, aptitude, degree of contrition, inner state, ignorance, physicalstrength and temperament, health and misery, behavior, position, occupation, upbringing, faith, disposition, purpose,way of life, degree of fearlessness, skill, natural intelligence, diligence, vigilance, sluggishness, and so on. -Thendiscrimination reveals the nature of things, their use, quantity and variety, as well as the divine purpose andmeaning in each word or passage of Holy Scripture. An example of how to discern such a meaning occurs in theGospel of St John. When the Greeks came wanting to see the Lord, He said, "The hour is come' (John 12:23).Clearly He meant that the moment for the calling of the Gentiles had arrived: for the time of His passion had begun,and He used this request from the Greeks as a sign. Discrimination clarifies all these things and also the significanceof the interpretation given by the fathers. As St Neilos says, it is not what happens that is the object of our enquiry,but why it happens.

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Discrimination

If we act in ignorance of all this we may expend much effort but will accomplish nothing. That is what St Antonythe Great and St Isaac say about those who struggle to attain bodily virtues but neglect the work proper to theintellect, though such work should be our main concern. In the words of St Maximos, 'Engage the body in asceticpractice according to its capacity, but apply your whole effort to the intellect." As he points out, the persondisciplining his body is sometimes overcome by gluttony and somnolence, by distraction and-talkativeness, andthrough these he darkens his intellect; at other times he clouds his mind through extended fasting, vigils andexcessive labors. But he who cultivates the intellect contemplates, prays and engages in theology, and is able toachieve every virtue.

A sensible person struggles intelligently to minimize, so far as he can, the needs of his body, so that he maydevote himself to the keeping of the commandments with few or no material preoccupations. Indeed, the LordHimself says, 'Do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or what you will drink, or about your body, what youwill put on' (Matt. 6:25). When a person is full of such anxiety he cannot even see himself: how then can heperceive the long-prepared snares of the enemy? For, as St John Chrysostom remarks, the enemy does not alwaysfight in the open. If he did, so-many of us would not have fallen so readily into his snares, leaving but a few that aresaved, as the Lord says (cf Luke 13:23-24). On the contrary, when he wants to plunge a person into some great sin,the enemy prepares the ground by making him negligent in trivial, unnoticed things. For example, before adultery,there are frequent licentious glances; before murder, moments of anger; before the clouding of the mind, smalldistractions; and, before these, concern for what appear to be the needs of the body. Because of this the Lord who, asthe Wisdom of the Father (cf. 1 Cor. 1:24), foreknows all things and so anticipates the devil's tricks, commands usto frustrate the impulses to sin by cutting them off before they can develop, lest by thinking that little things mayreadily be condoned we fall calamitously into great and terrible sins. This He emphasizes in the Sermon on theMount, when He says, "It was said by the men of old', that is, by those under the Law, and then continues, "But I sayto you' (cf Matt. 5:21-48).

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Discrimination

The true student of the Holy Gospels should therefore pay attention to what the Savior teaches him and do all hecan to escape from the enemy's traps. He should regard the commandments as a privilege and a great blessing, sincethrough their deep wisdom he cm save his soul. The commandments are a gift from God and, as St James, thebrother of God, rightly says, "All good giving and every perfect gift comes from above' (Jas. 1:17). And St John ofDamaskos says, "Thou hast appointed her who gave Thee birth as an infallible ambassador for us, 0 Christ; throughher intercession grant us Thy merciful Spirit, the bestower of all goodness, who comes through Thee from theFather.'

The man who has received the grace of being attentive to Holy Scripture will find, as the fathers say, allbenediction hidden everywhere within it. "He who is instructed in the kingdom of heaven', says the Lord, 'is like ahouseholder who produces from his storeroom things new and old' (Matt. 13:52); and this means someone who haslearnt how to read Scripture with devoted attention. For Scripture presents one aspect to most people, even if theythink that they understand its meaning, and another to the person who has dedicated himself to continual prayer, thatis, who keeps the thought of God always within him, as if it were his breathing. As St Basil the Great says, this istrue even if in a worldly sense the person is ignorant and uneducated with regard to secular and merely humanknowledge. God reveals Himself, as St John Khmakos states, to simplicity and humility, and not to those whoengage in laborious study and superfluous learning." Indeed, God turns away from such learning if it is not allied to

humility: as St Paul says, it is better to be ignorant in speech rather than in spiritual knowledge (cf. 2 Cor. 11:6).Spiritual knowledge is a gift of grace, but skill in speaking is a matter of human learning, as are the other forms ofworldly education: they do not contribute to the salvation of the soul. The example of the pagan Greeks makes thisclear.

Reading serves as a reminder for those who know from experience about what is being said, while to those wholack experience it provides instruction. As St Basil remarks, when God finds a heart free from all worldly mattersand worldly learning. He then writes on it His own thoughts as if it were a clean slate. I say this

so that no one will read what does not assist him to conform to God's will. But if in ignorance of this he does,read something unprofitable, let him quickly try to erase it from his mind through spiritual reading in the HolyScriptures, and especially in those that contribute to the salvation of his soul at the particular point which he hasreached in his development. If he is still engaged in ascetic

practice, let him read the lives and sayings of the fathers;if grace has raised him to the sphere of divine knowledge, let him read in all the Holy Scriptures, since, in the wordsof St Paul, this is able to destroy 'all the self-esteem that exalts itself against the knowledge of God' (2 Cor. 10:5),and to correct all disobedience and transgression through active virtue and true knowledge of the divinecommandments and teachings of Christ. Read nothing other than these; for what is the use of giving admittance toan unclean spirit rather than to the Holy Spirit? For our aim is to grasp the spirit of whatever text we study, eventhough that does not appear so difficult to us as it does to those with experience.

St Peter of Damaskos

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Spiritual Reading

The purpose of spiritual reading is to keep the intellect from distraction and restlessness, for this is the first steptowards salvation. Solomon says that the enemy "hates the sound of steadfastness' (Prov. 11:15. LXX), while thewandering of the mind is the first step towards sinning, as St Isaac states.' If you want to be completely free fromdistraction, keep to your cell. Should you become listless, work a little for the benefit of others and to help the sick,for this is what the man of dispassion and the man of spiritual knowledge do. This, indeed, is what the greatest of the

fathers did, allowing themselves for the sake of humility to act in the same way as those enslaved to the passions.For they were always able to hold God within themselves and to devote themselves to contemplation in Him,whether workmg with their hands or in the market place. As St Basil the Great says, even when in a crowd the trulyperfect are always alone with themselves and God.

St Peter of Damaskos

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Spiritual Reading

If you have not yet reached this stage, but want to get rid of some of your

listlessness, you should give up all talkwith other people and all sleep beyond what is necessary, allowing the listlessness to smelt you in body and soul,until such time as it grows exhausted and retreats in the face of your patient uninterrupted devotion to God, yourreadmg, and the purity of your prayer. For every enemy assailant, if he sees that he can accomplish something,continues to fight; but when he sees that he cannot, he withdraws, either for good or for a short while. Thus, if youwant to defeat your assailants you should endure with all patience: "He who endures to the end will be saved' (Matt.10:22). According to St Paul, it is right to afflict those who vex us, and to bring relief to ourselves when we areafflicted (cf 2 Thess. 1:6-7).

Nothing done in humility for the sake of God is bad. But things and pursuits differ. Everything not strictlynecessary is a hindrance to salvation - everything, that is to say, that does not contribute to the soul's salvation or tothe body's life. For it is not food,, but gluttony, that is bad; not money, but attachment to it; not speech, but idle talk;not the world's delights, but dissipation; not love of one's family, but the neglect of God that such love mayproduce; not the clothes worn only for covering and protection from cold and heat, but those that: are excessive andcostly; not the houses that also protect us from, heat and cold, as well as from anything human or animal that mightharm us, but houses with two or three floors, large and expensive; not owning something, but owning it when it hasno vital use for us; not the possession of books on the part of those who have embraced total poverty, but thepossession of books for some purpose other than spiritual reading; not friendship, but the having of friends who areof no benefit to one's soul; not woman, but unchastity; not wealth, but avarice; not wine, but drunkenness; not angerused in accordance with nature for the chastisement of sin, but its use against one's fellow-men.

Again, it is not authority that is bad, but the love of authority; not glory, but the love of glory and-what is worse—vainglory; not the acquisition of virtue, but to suppose that one has acquired it; not spiritual knowledge, but to thinkthat one is wise and - worse than this - to be ignorant of one's own ignorance; not true knowledge but what is falselycalled knowledge (cf. 1 Tim. 6:20); not the world, but the passions; not nature, but what is contrary to nature; not

agreement, but agreement to do what is evil does not contribute to the soul's salvation; not the body's members, buttheir misuse. For sight was given us, not so that we should desire what we ought not to desire, but so that on seeingGod's creatures we might because of them glorify the Creator and thus nourish our soul and our body. The ears weregiven us, not to listen to slander and stupidities, but to hear the word of God and every form of speech - of men,birds or anything else - that leads as to glorify the Creator. The nose was given us, not so that we might debilitateand unbrace our soul with delectable perfumes, as St Gregory the Theologian puts it, but so that we might breathethe air bestowed on us by God, and glorify Him because of it; for without it neither man nor beast can live bodily.

I marvel at God's wisdom, at how the most indispensable things - air, fire, water, earth - are readily available toall. And not simply this, but things conducive to the soul's salvation are more accessible than other things, whilesoul-destroying things are harder to come by. For example, poverty, which anyone can experience, is conducive tothe soul's salvation; while riches, which are not simply at our command, are generally a hindrance. It is the samewith dishonor, humiliation, patience, obedience, submission, self-control, fasting, vigils, the cutting off of one's will,bodily enfeeblement, thankfulness for all things, trials, injuries, the lack of life's necessities, abstinence from sensualpleasure, destitution, forbearance - in short, all the things conducive to the spiritual life are freely available. No onefights over them. On the contrary, everyone leaves them to those who choose to accept them, whether they havebeen sought for or have come against our will. Soul-destroying things, on the other hand, are not so readily withinour grasp - things, like wealth, glory, pride, intolerance, power, authority, dissipation, gluttony, excessive sleep,having one's own way, health and bodily strength, an easy life, a good income, unrestricted hedonism, lavish andcostly clothes, and so on. People struggle greatly for these things, but only a few attain them, and in any case thebenefit they confer is fleeting. In short, they produce a great deal of trouble and very little enjoyment. For they bringto those who possess them, as well as to those who do not possess them but desire to do so, all manner of distress.

None the less, it is not the thing itself, but its misuse, that is evil. For we were given hands and feet, not so that wemight steal and plunder and lay violent hands on one another, but so that we might

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Spiritual Reading

use them in ways agreeable to God. The weaker among us should use what we have in acts of compassiontowards the poor, so as to help our own spiritual development and to assist the needy; while those who are strongerin soul and body should give away all their possessions in imitation of Christ and His holy disciples. In this way wecan glorify God and at the same time leam to look with wonder at the divine wisdom hidden in our limbs. Forthrough God's providence our hands and fingers are apt for every skill and activity, whether writing or anythingelse. From God, too, comes the knowledge of numberless arts and scripts, of healing and medicine, of languages and

the various other branches of learning. In short, aU things, whether past, present or future, have been and are alwaysbeing given to us by God in His great goodness, so that our bodies may live and our souls may be saved, providedwe use all these things according to His purpose, glorifying Him through them with all thankfulness. If we fail to dothis, we will fall and perish, and all things will cause us affliction in this present age, while in the age to be they willbring on us agelong punishment, as has been said.

St Peter of Damaskos

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True Discrimination

If by the grace of God you have received the gift of discrimination, you should in great humility do everythingyou can to guard it, so that you do nothing without it. Otherwise you will bring on yourself greater chastisement bysinning knowingly because of your negligence. If you have not received this gift you should not think, say or doanything without consulting others about it, and without a basis of firm faith and pure prayer. Without such faith andsuch prayer you will never truly achieve discrimination.

Discrimination is bom of humility. On its possessor it confers spiritual insight, as both Moses and St JohnKlimakos say: such a man foresees the hidden designs of the enemy and foils them before they are put intooperation. It is as David states: "And my eyes looked down upon my enemies' (Ps. 14:7. LXX). Discrimination is

characterized by an unerring recognition of what is good and what is not, and the knowledge of the will of God inall that one does. Spiritual insight is characterized, first, by awareness of one's own failings before they issue inoutward actions, as well as of the stealthy tricks of the demons; and, second, by the knowledge of the mysterieshidden in the divine Scriptures and in sensible creation.

As has been already explained, humility, the mother of discrimination and spiritual insight, likewise has its owncharacteristic by which it is known. The humble person, must possess every virtue and yet truly think himself thegreatest of debtors and inferior to everythmg else in creation. If, however, a person does not think in this way, thenhe can be assured that he is mi fact inferior to everythmg else m creation, even though he seems to lead a life like

that of the angels. For even a true angel possessing so many virtues and so much wisdom cannot conform to theCreator's will unless he also possesses humility. What, then, can a person who thinks that he is an angel say forhimself if he lacks humility, source of all present and future blessings, begetter of that discrimination whichillumines the ends of the earth and without which all things are obscure?

Discrimination is not only called light; it truly is light. We need this light before we say or do anything. When it ispresent we are able to view everything else with wonder. We can marvel at how God, on the first and greatest ofdays, began by creating light, so that what was subsequently created might not he invisible and as if it did not exist,as St John of Damaskos says.' Let it be said again:

discrimination is light; and the spiritual insight it generates ismore necessary than all other gifts. For what is more necessary than to perceive the wiles of the demons and with thehelp of God's grace to protect one's soul? Other things most necessary to; us include, according to St Isaac, purity ofconscience; and, according to the apostle, the sanctification of the body (cf Rom. 12:1; 1 Cor. 6:19-20) withoutwhich 'no one will see the Lord' (Heb. 12:14).

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That We Should Not Despair Even If We Sin Many Times

Even if you are not what you should be, you should not despair. It is bad enough that you have sinned; why inaddition do you wrong God by regarding Him in your ignorance as powerless? Is He, who for your sake created thegreat universe that you behold, incapable of saving your soul? And if you say that this fact, as well as Hisincarnation, only makes your condemnation worse, then repent; and He will receive your repentance, as He acceptedthat of the prodigal son (cf Luke 16:20) and the prostitute (cf. Luke 7: 37-50). But if repentance is too much foryou,and you sin out of habit even when you do not want to, show humility like the publican (cf. Luke 18:13): this isenough to ensure your salvation. For he who sins without repenting, yet does not despair, must of necessity regardhimself as the lowest of creatures, and will not dare to judge or censure anyone. Rather, he will marvel at God'scompassion, and will be full of gratitude towards his Benefactor, and so may receive many other blessings as well.Even if he is subject to the devil in that he sins, yet from fear of God he disobeys the enemy when the latter tries tomake him despair. Because of this he has his portion with God; for he is grateful, gives thanks, is patient, fears God,does not judge so that he may not be judged. All these are crucial qualities. It is as St John Chrysostom says aboutGehenna: it is almost of greater benefit to us than the kingdom of heaven, since because of it many enter into thekingdom of heaven, while few enter for the sake of the kingdom itself; and if they do enter it, it is by virtue of God'scompassion. Gehenna pursues us with fear, the kingdom embraces us with love, and through them both we are savedby Christ's grace.

If those attacked by many passions of soul and body endure patiently, do not out

of negligence surrender their freewill, and do not despair, they are saved. Similarly, he who has attained the state of dispassion, freedom from fearand lightness of heart, quickly falls if he does not confess God's grace continually by not judging

anyone. Indeed, should he dare to judge someone, he makes it evident that in acquiring his wealth he has rehed onhis own strength, as St Maximos states. St John of Damaskos says that if someone still subject to the passions, andstill bereft of the light of spiritual knowledge, is put in charge of anyone, he is in great danger: and so is the personwho has received dispassion and spiritual knowledge from God but does not help other people.

Nothing so benefits the weak as withdrawal into stillness, or the man subject to the passions and without spiritualknowledge as obedience combined with stillness. Nor is there anything better than to know one's own weakness andignorance, nor anything worse than not to recognize them. No passion is so hateful as pride, or as ridiculous asavarice, 'the root of all evils' (1 Tim. 6:10): for those who with great labor mine silver, and then hide it in the earthagain, remain without any profit. That is why the Lord says, "Do not store up treasures on earth' (Matt. 6:19): andagain: 'Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also' (Matt. 6:21). For the intellect of man is drawn bylonging towards those things with which it habitually occupies itself, whether these be earthly things, or thepassions, or heavenly and eternal blessings. As St Basil the Great says, a persistent habit acquires all the strength ofnature.

A weak person especially ought to pay attention to the promptings of his conscience, so that he may free his soulfrom all condemnation. Otherwise at the end of his life he may repent in vain and mourn eternally. The person whocannot endure for Christ's sake a physical death as Christ did, should at least be willing to endure death spiritually.Then he will be a martyr with respect to his conscience, in that he does not submit to the demons that assail him, orto then' purposes, but conquers them, as did the holy martyrs and the holy fathers. The

first were bodily martyrs, thelatter spiritual martyrs. By forcing oneself slightly, one defeats the enemy: through slight negligence one is filledwith darkness and destroyed.

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A Short Discourse on the Acquisition of the Virtues and on Abstinence from the

Passions

According to St Basil the Great, nothing so darkens the mind as evil, and nothing so enlightens the intellect asspiritual reading in stillness. Nor does anything so quickly fill the soul with sorrow as the thought of death, or socontribute to our secret progress as self-reproach and the excising of our own will On the other hand, nothing soabets our secret destruction as conceit and self-satisfaction, or so cuts us off from God and provokes ourchastisement at the hands of other men as grumbling, or so disposes us to sin as a disorderly life and talkativeness.Again, nothing so quickly fosters the acquisition of virtue as the solitary life and meditation, or so rapidly promotesgratitude and thankfulness as reflection on God's gifts and our own wickedness. Nothing so augments the blessingsbestowed on us as our recognition of them, or so contributes to our salvation, even against our will, as trials andtemptations. There is no shorter way to Christ - that is to say, to dispassion and the wisdom of the Spirit - than theroyal way that avoids both excess and deficiency in all things; nor is any virtue more capable of comprehending thedivine will than humility and the abandoning of every personal thought and desire. Nothing so contributes to everygood action as pure prayer, and nothing so impedes the acquisition of the virtues as even the slightest mentaldistraction and day-dreaming.

The greater one's purity, the more clearly one sees how much one sins; and the more one sins, the more benightedone is, even though one may appear to be pure. Again, the more knowledge one has, the more one thinks oneselfignorant; and the more one is ignorant of one's ignorance and of the shortcomings in one's spiritual knowledge, themore one thinks one knows. The more the spiritual contestant endures afflictions, the more he will defeat the enemy;and, lastly, the more one tries for one day to do something good, the more one is a debtor all the

days of one's life,as St Mark has said; for even if the ability and desire to do good are one's own.

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the grace to do it comes from God. It is only because of this grace that we are able to do anything good; when wedo it, then, what have we to boast about? If we boast, it shows that we imagine we have done something goodsimply through our own strength, and that we unjustly condemn those incapable of doing the same. But he whodemands something of others should more rightfully demand it of himself.

If sinners should tremble because they have angered God, those who have been shielded by His grace because oftheir weakness and proneness to despair should tremble even more, since they are deeply in His debt. St Epiphaniossays that ignorance of the Scriptures is a huge abyss; worse still is evil consciously committed; while great is the

benefit that the soul receives through Scripture and through prayer. To bear with our neighbor; not to distress himwhen he wrongs us but to help him to be at peace when he is troubled, as St Dorotheos puts it; to show compassiontowards him, sharing his burden and praying for him, lull of longing that he may be saved and may enjoy everyother blessing of body and soul - this is true forbearance; and it purifies the soul and leads it towards God.

To heal a person is the greatest thing one can do and excels all other virtue, because among the virtues there isnothing higher or more perfect than love for one's neighbor. The sign of this love is not just that one does not keepfor oneself anything of which another has need, but also that, as the Lord enjoins, one should joyfully endure deathfor his sake (cf John 15:13), looking on it as a debt we have to pay. And this is as it should be: for we should loveour neighbor to the point of dying for him, not only because nature requires this of us, but also

because of theprecious blood poured out for us by Christ who commanded us to love in this way. Do not love yourself, says StMaximos, and you will love God; do not pander to your ego, and you will love your brother. Such love comesthrough hope; and to hope is to believe unhesitatingly that one will surely attain what one hopes for. This in turn isbom of a firm faith, where one has no concern whatsoever for one's own life or death, but casts all care upon God(cf. 1 Pet 5:7), as I said when speaking about the person who wants to acquire the signs of

dispassion, of which faith is the foundation. He who has faith should reflect that since God in His extremegoodness has created all things - ourselves included - out of non-existence. He is certainly capable of providing asHe thinks fit for our souls and bodies.

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How to Acquire True Faith

If we desire to acquire faith - the foundation of all blessings, the door to God's mysteries, unflagging defeat of ourenemies, the most necessary of all the virtues, the wings of prayer and the dwelling of God within our soul-we mustendure every trial imposed by our enemies and by our many and various thoughts. Only the inventor of evil, thedevil, can perceive these thoughts or uncover and describe them. But we should take courage; because if we forciblytriumph over the trials and temptations that befall us, and keep control over our intellect so that it does not give in to

the thoughts that spring up in our heart, we wiU once and for all overcome all

the passions; for it will not be we whoare victorious, but Christ, who is present in us through faith. It was with regard to this that Christ said, "If you havefaith no bigger than a mustard-seed../ (Luke 17:6). Yet even if our thought, in a moment of weakness, shouldsuccumb, we should not be afraid or despair, or ascribe to our own soul what is said to us by the devil. On thecontrary, we should patiently and diligently, to the limit of our strength, practice the virtues and keep the command-ments, in stillness' and devotion to God, freeing ourselves from all thoughts subject to our volition.

In this way the enemy, who day and night promotes every kind of fantasy and deceit, will not find us worriedabout his tricks and illusions and all the thoughts within which he lurks, presenting to us as truth what are reallydeceits and falsehoods, and so he will lose heart and go away. Through such experience of the devil's weakness, theman who practices Christ's commandments will no longer be alarmed by any of his tricks. On the contrary, he willdo whatever accords with God's will joyfully and without hindrance, strengthened by faith and assisted by God inwhom he has believed. As the Lord

Himself has said, 'AH things are possible for the person who believes" (Mark 9:23). For it is not he who fights theenemy, but God, who watches over him on account of his faith. As the Prophet-said, 'You have made the Most Highyour refuge' (Ps. 91:9. LXX). Such a person no longer feels anxiety about anything, for he knows that 'though thehorse is made ready for battle, salvation comes from the Lord' (Prov. 21:31). Because of his faith he faceseverything boldly. As St Isaac says, 'Acquire faith within you and you will trample on your enemies.'

The man of faith acts, not as one endowed with free will, but as a beast that is led by the will of God. He says toGod: 'I became as a beast before Thee; yet I am continually with Thee' (Ps. 73:22-23). If Thy desire is that I shouldbe at rest in Thy knowledge, I shall not refuse. If it is that I should experience temptation so as to learn humility,again I am with Thee. Of myself, there is absolutely nothing' I can do. For without Thee I would not have come intoexistence from non-

existence; without Thee I cannot live or be saved. Do what Thou wilt to Thy creature; for Ibelieve that, being good. Thou bestowest blessings on me, even if I do not recognize that they are for my benefit.Nor am I worthy to know, nor do I claim to understand, so as to be at rest: this might not be to my profit.

I do not dare to ask for relief in any of my battles, even if I am weak and utterly exhausted: for I do not know whatis good for me. 'Thou knowest all things' (John 21:17); act according to Thy knowledge. Only do not let me goastray, whatever happens; whether I want it or not, save me, though, again, only if it accords with Thy will. I, then,have nothing: before Thee I am as one that is dead; I commit my soul into Thy pure hands, in this age and in the ageto be. Thou art able to do all things; Thou knowest all things; Thou desirest every kind of goodness for all men and

ever longest for my salvation. This is clear from the many blessings that in Thy grace Thou hast bestowed andalways bestowest on us, visible and invisible, known to us and unknown; and from that gift of Thyself to us, 0 Sonand Logos of God, which is beyond our understanding. Yet who am I that I should dare to speak to Thee of thesethings. Thou searcher of hearts? I speak of them in order to make known to myself and to my enemies that I takerefuge in Thee, the harbor of my salvation. For I know by Thy grace that 'Thou an my God' (Ps. 31:14).

I do not dare to say many things, but only wish to set before Thee

an intellect that is inactive, deaf and dumb. It is not myself, but Thy grace that accomplishes all things: for,knowing that I am always full of evil, I do not attribute such things to my own goodness; and because of this I falldown as a servant before Thee, for Thou hast found me worthy of repentance, and 'I am Thy servant, and the son ofThy handmaid' (Ps. 116:16). But do not allow me, my Lord Jesus Christ, my God, to do, say or think anythingcontrary to Thy will: the sins 1 have already committed are enough. But in whatever way Thou desirest

have mercyon me. I have sinned: have mercy on me as Thou knowest. I believe. Lord, that Thou nearest this my pitiable cry,'Help Thou my unbelief (Mark 9:24), Thou who hast granted me, not only to be, but also to be a Christian. 'It is agreat thing'. St John of Karpathos has said, 'for me to be called a monk and a Christian.' As Thou hast said. Lord, toone of Thy servants, 'It is no light thing for you to be called by My name' (cf. Isa. 49:6. LXX). This is more to methan all the kingdoms of heaven or of earth. Let me always be called by Thy most sweet name. 0 Master, full ofcompassion, I give thanks to Thee.

Just as certain readings and certain words, tears and prayers are appropriate for one engaged in ascetic practice, sohis is a different kind of faith from that superior faith which gives birth to stillness. The former is the faith ofhearsay, the latter is the faith of contemplation, as St Isaac says. Contemplation is more sure than hearsay. For theordinary initial faith of the Orthodox is bom of natural knowledge, and from this faith are bom devotion to God,fasting and vigil, reading and psalmody, prayer and the questioning of those with experience. It is such practices thatgive birth to the soul's virtues, that is, to the constant observance of the commandments and of moral conduct.Through this observance come great faith, hope, and the perfect love that ravishes the intellect to God in prayer,when one is united with God spiritually, as St Neilos puts it.

The words of prayer are written once and for all, so that he who wishes to present his intellect motionless beforethe Holy and Life-giving Trinity may always pray one and the same-prayer. The intellect itself has me sense that it isseen, even though at that time it is utterly impossible for it to see anything, for it is imageless, formless.

colorless, undisturbed, undistracted, motionless, matterless, entirely transcending all the things that can beapprehended and perceived in the created world. It communes with God- in deep peace and with perfect calm,having only God m mind, until it is seized with rapture and found worthy to say the Lord's Prayer as it should besaid. This is what we are told by St Philmion and St Irene, as well as

by the holy apostles, the martyrs and other holymen. Anything other than this is illusion bom of self-conceit. For the Divine is infinite and uncircumscnbed, and theintellect that returns to itself must be in a similar state, so that through grace it may experience the indwelling of theHoly Spirit. "For we walk by faith, not by sight," says St Paul (2 Cor. 5:7).

For this reason we should persist in our ascetic practice, so that through this enduring persistence our intellect isdrawn in longing towards the Divine. For if the intellect does not find something that is superior to sensible realitiesit cannot direct its desire towards it, abandoning the things to which it has been so long accustomed. Just as thecompassionate and the dispassionate are not greatly harmed by the affairs of this life, since they manage them well,so those who have received great gifts of grace are not harmed, since they ascribe their achievements to God.

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That Stillness Is of Great Benefit toThose Subject to Passion

Stillness and withdrawal from men and human affairs are of benefit to all, but especially to those who are weakand subject to the passions. For the intellect cannot attain dispassion by means of ascetic practice alone: suchpractice must be followed by spiritual contemplation. Nor will anyone escape unharmed from distraction and fromexercising authority over others unless he has first acquired dispassion through withdrawal. The cares and confusion,of this life are liable to harm even the perfect and the dispassionate. Human effort is profitless, says St JohnChrysostom, without help from above; but no one receives

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such help unless he himself chooses to make an effort. We need always both things; we need the human and thedivine, ascetic practice and spiritual

knowledge, fear and hope, inward grief and solace, tearfulness and humility,discrimination and love. For. he says, all things in life are twofold: day and night, light and dark, health andsickness, virtue and vice, ease and adversity, life and death. Through the help from above we in our weakness cometo love God, while through our own effort we flee sin out of our fear of trials. But if we are strong we can love Godas our Father in all things, knowing that all things are 'wholly good and beautiful' (Gen. 1:31) and that God ordersthem for our benefit. We will restrain ourselves from pleasures and long for adversity, knowing that through suchself-restraint our bodies are imbued with life for the glory of the Creator, while through adversity our souls arehelped towards salvation by the ineffable mercy of God.

Men are of three kinds: slaves, hirelings or sons. Slaves do not love the good, but refrain from evil out of fear ofpunishment; this, as St Dorotheos observes, is a good thing, but not fully in accord with God's will. Hirelings lovewhat is good and hate what is evil, out of hope of reward. But sons, being perfect, refrain from evil, not Out of fearof punishment, but because they hate evil violently; and they do what is good, not because they hope for reward, butbecause they consider it their duty. They love dispassion because it imitates God and leads Him to dwell in them;through it they refrain from all evil, even if no punishment threatens them. For unless we are dispassionate God inHis holiness does not send down His Holy Spirit upon us, lest we violate His indwelling because out of habit we arestill drawn towards the passions, and so incur greater condemnation. But when we are established in virtue, and areno longer friendly with our enemies or pulled this way and that by our impassioned habits, then we receive graceand are not liable to condemnation through receiving it. It is for this reason, according to St John Klimakos, that Goddoes not reveal His will to us lest, after learning it, we disobey Him and so incur greater condemnation, failing likechildren to recognize in our ingratitude His limitless mercy towards us. For if we want to learn the divine will, hesays, we must die to the whole world and to our every wish.

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That Stillness Is of Great Benefit toThose Subject to Passion

We should not do any thing about which we feel hesitation, nor should we consider something good unless wecannot live or be saved without it. That is why we should question men of experience. In this way, through prayerand firm faith we receive a sense of assurance, until such time as we attain the perfect dispassion that makes ourintellect invulnerable and invmcible in eveiy good activity. Thus the battle is great, but we remain unharmed. "ForMy power comes to its fullness in your weakness', says the Lord to St Paul; and St Paul adds, "When I am weak,then I am strong' (2 Cor. 12:9-10). It is not good to be free from warfare. For the demons retreat for many reasons,as St John Klimakos explains: it may be in order to set an ambush, or to make one presumptuous; and they leavebehind self-elation or some other evil, contenting themselves with this on the grounds that it can take the place of theother passions.

The fathers, says the Gerontikon, kept the commandments; their successors wrote them down; but we have placedtheir books on the shelves. And even if we want to read them, we do not have the application to understand what issaid and to put it into practice; we read them either as something incidental, or because we think that by readingthem we are doing something great, thus growing full of pride. We do not realize that we incur greatercondemnation if we do not put into practice what we read, as St John Chrysostom says. And we should rememberwhat the Lord says about the servant who knew his master's will but failed to carry it out (cf Luke 12:47).

Thus reading and spiritual knowledge are good, but only when they lead to greater humility; and to seek advice isgood so long as one is not inquisitive about the life of one's teacher. As St Gregory the Theologian says: "Do notquestion the authority of him who teaches you or preaches to you." The Lord Himself commands us to cany outwhat the priests tell us to do (cf. Matt. 23:3). For the actions of those from whom we ask advice do not harm us; nor,on the other hand, does their advice help us if we fail to put it into practice. Each will have to give account forhimself: the teacher, for his words; the disciple, for his obedience in doing what he is told. Everything apart fromthis is contrary to nature and merits condemnation. As

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St Evstratios said: 'God is good and righteous, and in His goodness He gives us every good thing, so long as weare grateful, acknowledging through our thanksgiving the good we. have received. But if we are ungrateful, we arecondemned by the righteous judgment of God" Thus God's goodness and righteousness by nature supply us withevery good thing; if we misuse His gifts, they procure our agelong punishment.

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The Great Benefit of True Repentance

It is always possible to make a new start by means of repentance. 'You fell,' it is written, 'now arise' (cf Prov.24:16). And if you fall again, then rise again, without despairing at all of your salvation, no matter what happens. Solong as you do not surrender yourself willingly to the enemy, your patient endurance, combined with self-reproach,will suffice for your salvation. 'For at one time we ourselves went astray in our folly and disobedience', says StPaul. "... Yet He saved us, not because of any good things we had done, but in His mercy' (Tit. 3:3,5). So do notdespair in any way, ignoring God's help, for He can do whatever He wishes. On the contrary, place your hope inHim and He will do one of these things: either through trials and temptations, or in some other way which He aloneknows. He will bring about your restoration; or He will accept your patient endurance and humility in the place ofworks; or because of your hope He will act-lovingly towards you in some other way of which you are not aware, andso will save your shackled soul. Only do not abandon your Physician, for otherwise you will suffer senselessly thetwofold death because you do not know the hidden ways of God.

What has been said in relation to spiritual knowledge also applies to ascetic practice. Ever,' action of soul andbody is beset by six snares: to the left and right lie excess and deficiency of effort; above and below lie self-elationand despair; on the near side and the far side lie cowardice and over-boldness which, as St Gregory the Theologiansays, is very different from boldness, even though the words themselves

are similar. At the mid-point between these six snares lies action accomplished with due measure and with patienceand humility.

It is remarkable how the human intellect sees things differently according to its own light, even when these thingsare unalterable and in themselves remain what they are. It is because of this that we do not all have the same attitudeto things, but each of us uses them as he wishes, whether for good or for-ill. We use sensible things in our practicalactivity, and intelligible things in thought and disputation.

It seems to me that there are four ways of viewing men and that these correspond to the four states of which StGregory the Theologian speaks. Some, such as the saints and those who attain dispassion, flourish both in this worldand in the world to be. Others, such as the rich man in the Gospel (cf. Matt. 19:22), prosper only in this world, inthat, though they are blessed in soul or body, they are unworthy of it, since they are without gratitude towards theirBenefactor. Others, such as the paralytic (cf. Matt. 9:2), who are subject to prolonged illness and gladly embraceafflictions, are punished only in this world. Others, finally, such as those tempted like Judas by their own selfishdesires, are punished both in this world and in the world to be.

Moreover, men also have four different attitudes towards sensible realities. Some, like the demons, hate God'sworks, and they commit evil deliberately. Others, like the irrational animals, love these works because they areattractive, but their love is full of passion and they make no effort to acquire natural contemplation or to showgratitude. Others, in a way that befits men, love God's works in a natural manner, with spiritual knowledge andgratitude, and they use everything with self-control. Finally, others, like the angels, love these works in a mannerthat is above and beyond nature, contemplating all things to the glory of God and making use of them only in so faras they are necessary for life, as St Paul puts it (cf. 1 Tim. 6:8).

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God's Universal and Particular Gifts

We ought all of us always to give thanks to God for both the universal and the particular gifts of soul and bodythat He bestows on us. The universal gifts consist of the four elements and all that comes into being through them, aswell as all the marvelous works of God mentioned in the divine Scriptures. The particular gifts consist of all thatGod has given to each individual. These include wealth, so that one can perform acts of charity; poverty, so that onecan endure it with patience and gratitude; authority, so that one can exercise righteous judgment and establish virtue;obedience and service, so that one can more readily attain salvation of soul; health, so that one can assist those inneed and undertake work worthy of God; sickness, so that one may earn the crown of patience; spiritual knowledgeand strength, so that one may acquire virtue; weakness and ignorance, so that, turning one's back on worldly things,one may be under obedience in stillness and humility; unsought loss of goods and possessions, so that one maydeliberately seek to be saved and may be helped when incapable of shedding all one's possessions or even of givingalms; ease and prosperity, so that one may voluntarily struggle and suffer to attain the virtues and thus becomedispassionate and fit to save other souls; trials and hardship, so that those who cannot eradicate their own will- may

be saved in spite of themselves, and those capable of joyful endurance may attain perfection. All these things, evenif they are opposed to each other, are nevertheless good when used correctly; but when misused, they are not good,but are harmful for both soul and body.

Better than them all, however, is the patient endurance of afflictions; and he who has been found worthy of thisgreat gift should give thanks to God in that he has been all the more blessed. For he has become an imitator ofChrist, of His holy apostles, and of the martyrs and saints: he has received from God great strength and spiritualknowledge, so that he may voluntarily abstain from pleasure and may readily embrace hardship through theeradication of his own will and his rejection of unholy thoughts, and may thus always do and think what is inaccordance with God's will. Those

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who have been found worthy of using things as they ought to be used should in all humility give heartfelt thanksto God. for by His grace they have been freed from what is contrary to nature and from the transgression of thecommandments. We, however, who are still subject to the passions and who still misuse things, and who thereforeact in a manner that is contrary to nature, should tremble and in all gratitude should give heartfelt thanks to ourBenefactor, astonished at His unutterable forbearance, in that though we have disobeyed His commandments,misused His creation and rejected His gifts. He endures our ingratitude and docs not cease to confer His blessings onus, awaiting until our last breath for our conversion and repentance.

Thus we should all give thanks to Him, as it is said: 'In everything give thanks' (1 Thess. 5:18). Closely linked tothis phrase is another of St Paul's injunctions: 'Pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17), that is, be mindful of God atall times, in all places, and in every circumstance. For no matter what you do, you should keep in mind the Creatorof all things. When you see the light, do not forget Him who gave it to you; when you see the sky, the earth, the seaand all that is in them, marvel at these things and glorify their Creator; when you put on clothing, acknowledgewhose gift it is and praise Him who in His providence has given you life. In short, if everything you do becomes foryou an occasion for glorifying God, you will be praying unceasingly. And in this way your soul will always rejoice,as St Paul commends (cf. 1 Thess. 5:15). For as St Dorotheos explains, remembrance of God rejoices the soul; andhe adduces David as witness: 'I remembered God, and rejoiced' (cf. Ps. 77:3. LXX).

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How God Has Done All ThingsFor Our Benefit

God has done all things for our benefit. We are guarded and taught by the angels;

we are tempted by the demonsso that we may be humbled and have recourse to God, thus being saved from self-elation and delivered fromnegligence. On the one hand, we are led to

give thanks to our Benefactor through the good things of this world, by which I mean health, prosperity, strength,rest, joy, light, spiritual knowledge, riches, progress in all things, a peaceful life, the enjoyment of honors, authority,abundance and all the other supposed blessings of this life. We are led to love Him and to do what good we can,because we feel we have a natural obligation to repay God for His gifts to us by performing good works. It is ofcourse impossible to repay Him, for our debt always grows larger. On the other hand, through what are regarded ashardships we attain a state of patience, humility and hope of blessings in the age to be; and by these so-calledhardships I mean such things as illness, discomfort, tribulation, weakness, unsought distress, darkness, ignorance,poverty, general misfortune, the fear of loss, dishonor, affliction, indigence, and so on. Indeed, not only in the age tobe, but even in this present age these things are a source of great blessing to us.

Thus God in His unutterable goodness has arranged all things in a marvelous way for us; and if you want tounderstand this and to be as you should, you must struggle to acquire the virtues so as to be able to accept withgratitude everything that conies, whether it is good or whether it appears to be bad, and to remain undisturbed in allthings. And even when the demons suggest some pride-provoking thought in order to fill you with self-elation, youshould remember the shameful things they have said to you in the past and should reject this thought and becomehumble. And when they again suggest to you something shameful, you should remember that pride-provokingthought and so reject this new suggestion. Thus, through the co-operation of grace and by means of recollection, youmake the demons cast out the demons, and are not brought to despair because of their shameful suggestions, ordriven out of your mind because of your own conceit. On the contrary, when your intellect is exalted, you

fakerefuge in humility; and when your enemies humble you before God, you are raised up through hope. In this wayuntil your last breath you will never become confused and fall, or through fear succumb to despair.

This, according to the Gerontikon, is the great work of the monk. When his enemies suggest one thing, hesuggests something else: when they put forward this something else, he introduces the first thing again, knowing thatnothing in this life is exempt from change, and that 'he who endures to the end will be saved" (Matt. 10:22). But theperson who wants things to come about as he himself wills

does not know where he is going and, like a blind man thrown hither and thither by the wind, he is entirelydominated by whatever befalls him. Like a slave be fears what produces distress, and he is led captive by his ownconceit: in his inane joy he thinks he possesses things he has never seen and of whose origin he is completelyignorant - and if he says he is not ignorant of it, then he is all the more blind. This happens because he does notcensure himself Such lack of self-criticism is a form of self-satisfaction and leads imperceptibly to destruction, as StMakanos says in his discourses about the monk who saw the heavenly Jerusalem: while this monk was praying withsome of the brethren, his intellect was ravished in ecstasy, but he perished because he thought that he had achievedsomething by his own efforts and did not realize that he had become an even greater debtor. Just as those dominatedby the passions do not even know what is obvious to all because of the obfuscation produced by their passions, sothe dispassionate, because of the purity of their intellect, know things of which most are ignorant.

God's speech, says St Maximos, is not loose chatter, for though we were all to speak at length, we still would nothave uttered the equivalent of a single word of God. For example. God says, 'You shall love the Lord your God withall your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might'(Deut. 6:5): yet how much have the fathers said andwritten - and still say and write - without equaling what is contained in that single phrase? For, as St Basil the Greathas said, to love God with all your soul means to love nothing together with God: for if someone loves his own soul,he loves God, not with all his soul, but only partially: and if we love ourselves and innumerable other things as well,how can we love God or dare to claim that we love Him? It is the same with love of one's neighbor. If we are notwilling to sacrifice this temporal life, or perhaps even the life to come, for the

sake of our neighbor, as were Moses and St Paul, how can we say that we love him? For Moses said to Godconcerning his people. If Thou will forgive their sins, forgive; but if not, blot me as well out of the book of lifewhich Thou hast written' (Exod. 32:32. LXX); while St Paul said, "For 1 could wish that 1 myself were severed fromChrist for the sake of my brethren (Rom. 9:3). He prayed, that is to say, that he should perish in order that othersmight be saved - and these others were the Israelites who were seeking to kill him.

Such are the souls of the saints: they love their enemies more than themselves, and in this age and in the age tocome they put their neighbor first in all things, even though because of his ill-will he may be their enemy. They donot seek recompense from those whom they love, but because they have themselves received they rejoice in givingto others all that they have, so that they may conform to their Benefactor and imitate His compassion to the best oftheir ability; "for He is bountiful to the thankless and to sinners' (cf Luke 6:35). Indeed, the more a man is foundworthy to receive God's gifts, the more he ought to consider himself a debtor to God, who has raised him from theearth and bestowed on dust the privilege of imitating to some degree its Creator and God.

For to endure injusticewith joy, patiently to do good to one's enemies, to lay down one's own life for one's neighbor, and so on, are giftsfrom God, bestowed on those who are resolved to receive them from Him through their solicitude in cultivating andprotecting what has been entrusted to them, as Adam was commanded to do (cf. Gen. 2:15). In this way they holdfast to the gifts through their gratitude towards their Benefactor. For we have never achieved anything good on ourown, but all good things are ours from God by grace, and come as it were from nothingness into being. For "what doyou have which you did not receive?' asks St Paul - receive, that is, freely from God; "and if you received it, why doyou boast as if you had not received it" (1 Cor. 4:7), but had achieved it by yourselt7 Yet by yourself you cannotachieve anything, for the Lord has said: 'Without Me, you can do nothing' (John 15:5).

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How It Is Impossible to be

Saved Without Humility

Because of the great obscurity produced by the passions, a person may become so demented as to imagine in hislack of humihty that he is the equal of the angels, or even greater than they. It was precisely this lack of humility onLucifer's part that was enough without any other sin to turn him into darkness. What, then, will be the fate of a manwho is without humility, since he is but dust and mortal, not to say a sinner? Perhaps in his blindness he does notbelieve that he has sinned. St John Chrysostom says that the perfect man will certainly become the equal of theangels, as the Lord affirms; but he will do so in the resurrection of the dead, and not in this present world. Even thenthe perfect will not be angels, but 'equal to the angels' (Luke 20:36). This means that men cannot forsake their ownnature, though like the angels they can become changeless through grace and released from all necessity, free ineverything they do, possessing ceaseless joy, love of God, and all that "the eye has not seen, and the ear has notheard'(1 Cor. 2:9).

In this present life, however, it is impossible for anyone to become perfect, though he may receive as it were apledge of the blessings promised him. For just

as those who have not received God's gifts should humble themselvesbecause of their indigence, so those who have received them should likewise humble themselves, since they havereceived them from God; otherwise they will be condemned for their lack of gratitude. And just as the wealthy oughtto confess God's grace because of the gifts He has given them, so those who are rich in virtues ought to do so all themore. Just as the poor should give thanks to God and return rich love to those who assist them, so all the moreshould the wealthy give thanks, for through God's providence they are able to perform acts of charity and so aresaved both in this age and in the age to be. For without the poor they cannot save their souls or nee the temptationsof wealth.

Just as disciples should love their masters, so masters should love their disciples, and on behalf of each other theyshould mutually acknowledge the grace of God who has given to all men spiritual knowledge and every other goodthing. For these good things we

ought all of us always to give thmks to Him, especially those who have received from Him the power to renew theirholy baptism through repentance, because without repentance no one can be saved. For the Lord has said, 'Why doyou call me. Lord, Lord, yet fail to do the thmgs I tell you?' (Luke 6:46). But let no one be so stupid as to think, onhearing these or similar words, that if he does not call upon the Lord he will not be culpable. On the contrary, he willbe all the more condemned; for, as the Lord has said, 'If they do these things when the wood is green, what willhappen when it is dry?" (Luke 23:31); and as Solomon says, 'If the righteous man is only just saved, where will theungodly and the sinner appear?' (Prov. 11:31. LXX).

Yet when a person sees himself beset on all sides by the divine commandments he should not despair and sosuffer greater condemnation than one who commits suicide. Rather, he should marvel at how the divine Scripturesand the commandments urge a man from this side and that towards perfection, so that he cannot find a way to escape

from the good by seeking relief in what is inferior. As soon as he wishes to do something bad, he finds himself faceto face with threatening dangers, and so he turns towards the good. God in His love arranges all this in a marvelousmanner, so that every man may somehow become perfect, even in spite of himself, if only he will take himself inhand. Those who feel gratitude, filled with a sense of shame because of the blessings they have received, embark onthe spiritual contest like people crossing over a river while asleep, as St Ephrem puts it. God has multiplied ourtrials, says St Isaac, so that out of fear of them we may take refuge in Him. He who does not understand this, butthrough self-indulgence rejects this gift, has slain and destroyed himself: having received arms for use against hisenemies, he has used them to kill himself. For just as God, says St Basil the Great, wants to do good to all becauseHe Himself is good, so the devil, because he himself is evil, desires to involve everyone in his own depravity, eventhough he cannot do this. And just as loving parents, impelled by their love, turn upon their children with threatswhen they do foolish things, so God permits trials and temptations because they are a rod that turns those who areworthy away from the devil's maleficence. "He who spares his rod hates his son; but he who loves him chastens hundihgently' (Prov. 13:24).

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How It Is Impossible To BeSaved Without Humility

Self-indulgent and self-centered as we are, peril besets us on both sides. Those who love God are saved throughthe trials and temptations He allows them to undergo; but despite such trials we are threatened with destructionbecause of our pride and because we fail to remain faithful to God, as children who are 'chastened and not killed' (2Cor. 6:9). Let us therefore choose the less perilous course. For it is better to take refuge in God by patiently enduringwhatever befalls us than to turn away from Him in fear of facing the trials and temptations He may send; for if wedo the latter, we fall into the hands of the devil - which means eternal destruction - or, rather, we bring punishmentupon ourselves along with him. For we are faced with this alternative: we must endure either temporary trials andtemptations, or else agelong punishment. The righteous, on the other hand, are free from both the perils which besetus, for they welcome

joyfully what seems to us painful, and they embrace trials and temptations as an opportunityfor profit, while remaining invulnerable to them. For if a man is hit by an arrow but not wounded he will not die; itis the man who receives a mortal wound who perishes from it. In what way did the plague harm Job? Did it notrather add to his glory? Or did calamity perturb the apostles and martyrs? Rather they rejoiced in it, because 'theywere found worthy to suffer disgrace for the sake of His name' (Acts 5: 41).

The more the victor has to struggle, the more he is honored, and from this he derives great joy. When such aperson hears the sound of the trumpet, he does not feel fear because it summons him to face death, but rather herejoices because it foretells the glory that awaits him. For there is nothing that so readily prepares one for victory asbravery combined with a firm faith; and nothing so readily prepares one for defeat as self-centeredness and thecowardice that comes from lack of faith. And there is no better instructor in courage than diligence and experience;nor in clarity of thought than spiritual reading in stillness. Nor is there any cause of forgetfulness so great asindolence, or any swifter path to the forgiveness of sins than the patient endurance of evil. There is no surer way toattain forgiveness of sins than repentance and the eradication of evil, and no more rapid progress of soul than thatachieved by cutting off one's own desires and thoughts. Nor is there anything greater than casting oneself down

before God day and night and asking that His will be done in all things; or anything worse than loving the licenseand distraction of

soul or body. For such license is in no way beneficial to those of us who cleave to the good because we are stillfrightened of trials and punishment. On the contrary, we-are helped by watchfulness and by turning away fromworldly affairs, so that, at least by renouncing those things that harm us because of our weakness, we may be able tostruggle with our thoughts.

The dispassionate rule over the ruling spirits because they have already

triumphed over their shameful passions,while those still under obedience to a spiritual father must struggle with the spirits that are subordinate. Both StMakanos and Abba Kronios say that there are ruling demons and demons that are subordinate. The ruling demonsare self-esteem, presumption and so on; the subordinate demons are gluttony, unchastity and similar things. Thosewho have attained perfect love have the power to do what is good without having to force themselves: they rejoicein doing it and never wish to cease. Should they encounter some unsought obstacle, they act under complete control:drawn by their love for God they resort at once to stillness and spiritual work as though to a familiar and delightfulpursuit. It is to such men that the fathers say: 'Pray a little, read a little, meditate a little, work a little, watch overyour intellect a little, and in this way pass your time." They can say this because the dispassionate have control overthemselves and are not sinfully led captive by their own desires. When they want, they control the intellect andcommand the body as though it were their servant.

We, however, ought to be subject to a rule of life, so that we are under an obligation to do what is good, evenagainst our will. For we still pander to our passions and our pleasures, to the comfort of our bodies and to our owndesires; and so the enemy leads our intellect where he wills. In the same way our body, dominated by disorderedimpulses, does whatever it likes uncontrollably. This is only to be expected; for where the intellect is not incommand, everything is out of control and contrary to nature. It is altogether different with the true Israelites. Whenthe Lord says to Nathanael, 'Behold, a true Israelite, in whom there is no guile' (John 1 : 47), he thereby proclaimsthe virtue of the man; for Nathanael means 'zeal for God'. The name given him by his family was "Simon'; he wascalled 'the Canaanite' because he came from Cana of Galilee, and 'Nathanael' because of his virtue. Thus theIsraelite - that is to say, the Intellect that sees God - is without guile. For, according to St Basil the Great,

it is usual in the divine Scripture to call a man by a name expressing his

particular virtue, rather than by the namegiven him at birth; So it is in the case of the two chief apostles, Peter and Paul: Peter was first called Simon and thengiven the name Peter because of his steadfastness (cf Mark 3:16), while Saul, which means "stormy", was changedto Paul, which means 'rest", 'repose" (cf. Acts 13:9). And this was fitting: for at first Paul troubled and disturbed thefaithful, but later he gave rest to their souls by word and act, as St John Chrysostom says of him.

Consider the reverence shown by St Paul. When he wished to speak about God, he did not begin until he hadoffered to Him the prayer and thanksgivmg that befits Him, thus showing that it was from God that he had hisknowledge and strength. And this is the right order, for counsel comes after prayer. Likewise St Luke did not leavethe Acts of the Apostles incomplete because of negligence or some worldly constraint, but because he departed thislife to be with God. We, however, leave our tasks unfinished because of our negligence or debility, for we do notcany out the work of God diligently and do not regard it as our main task; on the contrary, we disdain it as a kind ofincidental chore. Because of this we fail to prosper, or indeed often regress, like those others who 'turned back' andno longer followed Jesus (cf John 6:66). And yet, says St John Chrysostom, what Jesus said was nothing harsh, asthey thought, for he was speaking to them about doctrine. None the less, where a resolute disposition and desire arelacking, even easy things appear difficult-though the reverse is true as well.

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On Building up The SoulThrough The Virtues

According to St Basil the Great, the chief thing that every man needs is endurance, just as the earth needs water.On this earth he should lay the foundation of faith (cf 2 Pet. 1:5). Then discrimination, like an experienced builder,can set about slowly building the house of the soul with clay taken from the earth of humility, successively bindingone stone to another - that is, one virtue to another - until the roof,

which is perfect love, is put in place. Then, when it has posted good doorkeepers, always bearing arms - that is tosay, luminous thoughts and godlike actions capable of protecting the king from being disturbed - the master of thehouse comes and takes up residence in it. It should not have a female doorkeeper, one who is busy with her ownhandiwork, as St Neilos says in his interpretation of the Old Testament: he explains how it was for this reason thatthe Patriarch Abraham did not appoint a female porter, but rather someone who was manly - swift, incisive thought -armed with, among other things, 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (Eph. 6:17), so that he mightfight off and slay those who try to enter. For such a doorkeeper is sleepless and stands at his post slaying alienthoughts with retaliatory action and confuting speech. He repels everything that enters the heart contrary to God'spurpose, disdaining and rejecting it, so that the illumined intellect may never stop contemplating God or be empty ofdivine thoughts. This is the work of stillness, as St Neilos remarks. Elsewhere, referring to Holy Scripture, St Neilosexplains that distraction is the cause of the intellect's obscuration. This is to be expected; for if the intellect is notcompletely confined like water in a pipe, then the mind cannot be gathered into itself, and so rise to God. And if onedoes not rise spiritually and taste something at least of what is above, how can one readily be detached from what isbelow?

Thus, as St Paul says (cf 2 Cor. 5:7), we should press forward on the basis of faith, patiently striving to conformourselves to God's will. And, with time, those who make good progress succeed HI attaining a partial knowledge andin overthrowing the enemy. They will then receive the fullness of this knowledge in the world to be, when the mirror- this mortal life - has been broken (cf 1 Cor. 13:12), and when the soul no longer desires against the flesh, or theflesh against the Spirit (cf Gal. 5:17), and when sloth does not engender forgetfulness or forgetfulness ignorance.This is what most of us experience in this present life which is why we need a written text to remind us. Indeed,often a thought has spontaneously occurred to me, and it was by writing it down that I committed it to memory.Thus in time of spiritual struggle I had it as a source of aid or relief or gratitude, supported as it was by the testimonyof divine Scripture.

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On Building up The SoulThrough The Virtues

Had I been negligent about writing, it down, I would not have found it when I had need of it, and I would have beendeprived of its help by that greatest of evils, forgetfulness.

For this reason we ought to learn the virtues through practicing them, not merely through talking about them, sothat by acquiring the habit of them we do not forget what is of benefit to us. 'The kingdom of God', as St Paul says,'resides not in words but in power' (1 Cor. 4:20). For he who tries to discover things through actual practice willcome to understand what gain or loss lies in any activity that he pursues, as St Isaac says; and he can also giveadvice to others, for he has often suffered and has thereby gained experience. For some things, St Isaac tells us,appear good, but conceal no small harm; while others appear bad, but contain within themselves the greatest profit.

For this reason, he states, not every man can be trusted when giving advice to those who seek it. We can trust onlyhim who has received from God the grace of discrimination and who, as St Maxnnos says, has acquired throughgreat humihty and long practice of the virtues an intellect blessed with spiritual insight. Such a man is in a positionto advise, not everyone, but at least those who seek him out voluntarily and who question him by their own choice;for he has learned things in their true order. It is because of his humility, and because his questioners seek him outvoluntarily, that what he says is stamped on the soul of his listeners: they are filled with the warmth of faith,regarding their good adviser as if he were that 'wonderful counselor" of whom the prophet Isaiah speaks, calling him'mighty God, ruler, prince of peace' (Isa. 9:6. LXX).

This refers of course to our Lord Jesus Christ, who said to the man who appealed to Him, 'Who set me up as ajudge or arbitrator over you?" (Luke 12:14). Yet He also says, 'The Father has committed all judgment to the Son"(John 5:22). Through His holy humility. He shows us here, as everywhere, the path to salvation, and how He doesnot constrain anyone. 'If any man will come after Me," He says, Tet him deny himself and follow Me" (Man. 16:24),that is, let him not worry about his own life in any way, but just as I actively undergo My

visible and voluntary deathfor the sake of all, so should he follow Me in word and action, as did the apostles and martyrs; and if he cannot dothis outwardly, then let him endure death so far as the probity of

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his intention is concerned. Again, to the rich young man He sajd 'If you want to be perfect, go and sell all you haveand come and follow Me" (Matt. 19:21).

It is with reference to this incident that St Basil the Great observes that the young man lied when he said that hehad kept the commandments; for if he had kept them, he would not have acquired many possessions, since the firstcommandment in the Law is, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your soul" (Deut. 6:5). The word 'all'forbids him who loves God to love anything else to such an extent that it would make him sad were it to be takenaway. After this the Law says, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself (Lev. 19:18), that is, "you shall love everyman". But how can he have kept this commandment if, when many other men lacked daily nourishment, he hadmany possessions and was passionately attached to them? If, like Abraham, Job and other righteous men, he hadregarded those possessions as the property of God, he would not have gone away sorrowing. St John Chrysostomsays the same thing: the young man believed that what was said to him by the Lord was true, and this was why hewent away full of sorrow, for he had not the strength to carry it into effect. For there are many who believe thesayings of the Scriptures, but have not the strength to fulfill what is written.

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A Treasury of Divine KnowledgeThe Great Value of Love and of Advice Given With Humility

The Lord, then, gives us these and many other similar counsels, as also do the apostles when they say, "We exhortyou, beloved, to do this thing or that." We, however, are unwilling to encourage those who seek advice from us- Yet,if they

saw us humble and full of respect for them, they would listen to us with joy, feeling assured because wespeak the words of Holy Scripture with great humility and love. They would eagerly pursue the honor and lovewhich they receive from us and, together with this honor and love, they would also accept what is difficult, sincebecause of our love it would appear easy to them.

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The Great Value of Love and of Advice Given With Humility

This was the case with the holy apostle Peter, who repeatedly heard of death and the cross and yet rejoiced (cf.John 21: 18-20); they were as nothing to him, for he was filled with the love he felt towards his Master. He was notconcerned about miracles, as unbelievers are, but said to the Lord: 'Thy words are the words of eternal life. Webelieve and are assured that Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God' (John 6:68-69). It was not thus with Judas,who died twice; for he hanged himself, yet did not die, but lived on unrepentant, fell ill, and 'burst open', as theApostle Peter says (Acts 1:18). Then again, the holy Apostle Paul says in one place to the brethren: 'So great is ouraffection for you that we wished to share with you not the Gospel of Christ only, but also our own souls' (1 Thess.1:8); and elsewhere he says, 'We are your servants for Christ's sake' (2 Cor. 4:5). Again, writing to Timothy, hetells him to treat the elders as fathers and the younger men as brethren (cf 1 Tim. 5:1). Who is capable of graspingthe humility of the saints and the burning love they felt toward God and their neighbor? Indeed, we should beattentive not only to God and our neighbor, but to everyone to whom we speak or write.

For he who wishes to admonish someone or to give him advice - or, rather, to refresh his memory, as St JohnKlimakos says - should first be purified of the passions, so that he may truly understand God's purpose and the stateof the person who asks for his counsel. For the same medicine is not suited for all, even when the illness is thesame.' Then we must ascertain from the person who is seeking advice whether he does this because he has once andfor all committed himself to obedience in soul and body; or whether he has made his request spontaneously and withfervent faith, seeking counsel from us before questioning

his own teacher; or whether there is something else thatforces him to pretend that he longs for such counsel. For if this last is the case both teacher and disciple willsuccumb to falsehood and idle talk, deceitfulness and many other things. The disciple, forced by his supposedteacher to speak against his will, feels ashamed and tells lies, pretending that he wants to do good; and the teacheralso acts deceitfully, flattering his disciple in order to discover what is hidden in his mind, and in general employingevery kind of trick and speaking at length, in spite of the

fact that Solomon has said. Through talkativeness you will not escape sin' (Prov. 10:19). St Basil the Great has alsodescribed the sins that come from talkativeness.

All this has been said, not so that we should refuse to advise those who come to us readily and with firm faith,especially if we have attained a state of dispassion; it is said so that we should not, out of self-esteem,presumptuously teach those who do not express the wish to hear us either through their actions or through theirfervent faith. While we are still subject to the passions we should not do this even if we feel we have the authority todo so. Rather, as the fathers have said, unless questioned by the brethren we should not say anything by way ofgiving help, so that any benefit is a consequence of their own free choice. Both St Paul and St Peter followed thisprinciple (cf. Philem., verse 14; 1 Pet. 5:2); and St Peter adds that we should not lord it over the members of ourflock but be an example to them (cf. 1 Pet. 5:3). And St Paul wrote to St Timothy, 'The fanner who does the workshould be the first to eat of the produce" (2 Tim. 2:6); that is to say, first practice what you intend to preach. Again,he writes, "Let no one slight you because you are young' (1 Tim. 4:12); that is, do nothing that is immature orchildish, but rather be as one who is perfect in Christ. Similarly, it is said in the Gerontikon that unless questionedby the brethren the fathers said nothing that might contribute to the soul's salvation; they regarded unsolicited adviceas vain chatter. This is quite right; for it is because we think that we know

more than others that we speak unbidden.And the more we are guilty of this, the greater the freedom before God we assume we possess, although the closerthe saints draw to God, the more they regard themselves as sinners, as St Dorotheos says; they are astounded by theknowledge of God that they have been granted and are reduced to helplessness.

So, too, the holy angels in their infinite happiness and wonder can never satisfy their longing to glorify God; andbecause they have been found worthy of celebrating so great a Master, they sing His praises ceaselessly, marvelingat what He has brought to pass, as St John Chrysostom says, and advancing to still greater knowledge, as St Gregorythe Theologian states. It is the same with all the saints, in this world and in the next. Just as the angels transmitillumination to each

other, so intelligent beings are instructed by each other. Some derive their knowledge from the divine Scriptures andteach those who are more in need, while others are taught spiritually by the Holy Spirit and make known to theirbrethren in writing the mysteries that have been revealed to them.

Therefore we all need to humble ourselves before God and before each other, in that we have received from Godour being and all other things, and from one another, through Him, our knowledge. He who humbles himself isillumined all the more, while he who refuses to humble himself remains in darkness, as was the case with him whowas the Morning-star and is now the devil. For Lucifer originally belonged to the lowest angelic order, the one

closest to the earth and the furthest from the supreme order that stands beside the unapproachable throne; butbecause of his self-elation he and those who obeyed him became lower not only than the nine orders of angels andthan us who inhabit the earth, but lower even than the subterranean powers: for he was cast into Tartarus because ofhis senseless arrogance.

Because of this it is often said that presumption alone, without any other sin, is enough to destroy the soul; for hewho regards his sins as trivial is allowed to fall into those that are greater, as St Isaac says. And he who has receiveda gift from God, and is ungrateful for it, is already on the way to losing it; for, as St Basil the Great says, he hasmade himself unworthy of God's gift. For gratitude is a form of intercession. Only it must not be like the gratitudeof the Pharisee, who condemned others and justified himself (cf. Luke 18:11). On the contrary, it must make oneregard oneself as a greater debtor than all other men; one gives thanks in astonished bewilderment because oneunderstands God's unutterable restraint and forbearance. Moreover, one ought to marvel that God, who is withoutneed, who is praised above all, accepts this gratitude from us in spite of the way we anger and embitter Himconstantly after He has bestowed on us so many and so varied blessings, both universal and particular.

These blessings, of both body and soul, have been described by St Gregory the Theologian and the other fathers,and they take numberless forms. One of them consists in the fact that in the Holy Scriptures some things are obviousand easy to grasp, while others are

unclear and difficult to grasp. Through the first category God draws the slower amongst us towards faith andtowards the investigation of more difficult things; and in this way He ensures that we do not fall into despair andlose our faith because of our utter failure to understand what is said. Through the second category He preserves usfrom incurring even greater condemnation by disdaining the passages that we can understand. He desires that thosewho want to do so should labor willingly to search out and put into effect what is unclear- and for this they willreceive praise, as St John Chrysostom says.

That the Frequent Repetition Found in Divine Scripture is not Verbosity

Divine Scripture often repeats the same words, yet this is not to be regarded as verbosity. On the contrary, bymeans of this frequent repetition it unexpectedly and compassionately draws even those who are very slow ingrasping things to an awareness and understanding of what is being said; and it ensures that a particular saying does

not escape notice because of its fleetingness and brevity. This can happen especially when we are much involved inthe affairs of this life, and know nothing save in part - though, as St John Chiysostom says, we do not know whollyeven what is given 'in part", but know only a part of a part/ This part Itself will be 'done away with' (1 Cor. 13:10),not in the sense that it disappears and is reduced to nothing - for then we would have no knowledge at all and wouldnot be human - but in the sense that it will give place to the knowledge that comes from meeting "face to face', in thesame way as childhood disappears when one grows up, to use the analogy given by St Paul (cf. ICor. 13:11-12).This again is what St John Chrysostom means when he says that now we know that heaven exists, though not what itis: but that later the lesser will be "done away with' by the greater, that is, by our knowing what heaven is, so thatour knowledge increases.

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For there are many mysteries hidden in the divine Scriptures, and we do not know God's meaning in what is saidthere. "Do not be contemptuous of our frankness', says St Gregory the Theologian, "and find fault with our words,when we adroit our ignorance.' It is stupid and uncouth, declares St Dionysios the Areopagite, to give attention notto the meaning intended but only to the words.' But he who seeks with holy grief will find. This is a task to beundertaken in fear, for through fear things hidden are revealed to us.

Thus in one passage the prophet Isaiah says, 'The dead shall not see life' (Isa. 26:14. LXX): in another he says,'The dead shall rise' (Isa. 26:19. LXX). But this

is not contradiction, as they think who fail to understand themeaning disclosed by a spiritual interpretation of divine Scripture. For he was referring to the idols of the Gentileswhen he said, "They shall not see life', because they are soulless; while when he said, "The dead shall rise', he wasreferring to the general resurrection and the blessedness of the righteous-though he was also prophesying the risingof the dead together with our Savior Jesus Christ. Similarly, in the Holy Gospels, in the accounts of thetransfiguration of the Lord, one of the Evangelists says "after six days' (Matt. 17:1: cf. Mark 9:2) and another speaksof eight days'(Luke 9:28) - meaning, in each case, after the preceding miracles and teaching of the Lord. But the oneleaves out of the reckoning the first and last days and counts only the six days that lie between, while the otherincludes both of these and so speaks of eight days.

Again, in his Gospel St John the Theologian says at one point, "And there are many other signs that Jesusperformed in the presence of His disciples which are not recorded in this book' (John 20: 30); while at another hesays, 'And there are also many other things which Jesus did' (John 21:25), without saying "in the presence of Hisdisciples'. Concerning these passages St Prochoros, who wrote them both down, says that in the first case theEvangelist is referring to the miracles and Other things the Lord did, which he did not record because they had beenpreviously written down by the other Evangelists; and that is why he added "in the presence of His disciples'. In thesecond case he is referring to the creation of the world, when the Logos of God was in His incorporeal state, andwhen together with Him the Father created all things out of non-existence.

That the Frequent Repetition Found in Divine Scripture is not Verbosity

saying, 'Let this thing be, and it was" (of. Gen. 1:3-14). 'If all these things were to be recorded individually," saysthe Theologian, "I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written" (John21:25).

Generally speaking, every scriptural passage and every word of God, or of any saint, refers in a hidden way to thepurpose of created things, whether they belong to the sensible or to the intelligible realm. The same is also true ofany

human statement. And no one knows the meaning of the passage in question except by revelation. As the Lordsaid, 'The wind blows where it wills' (John 3:8). Commenting on this, St John Chrysostom observes that the Lorddid not mean that the wind has a power of its own: but, making allowances for Nikodimos' weakness. He spoke ofthe wind so that Nikodimos might understand what was being said to him. The Lord was in fact referring to the HolySpirit when He spoke of the wind. He was trying to tell Nikodimos and others that what He said to them was spiritor spiritual and not what they thought it was. He was not speaking about bodily things, in a way that could beunderstood simply by earthly-minded people. For this reason St John of Damaskos writes that, if the speaker doesnot disclose to us the meaning of what he says, we cannot know what it means. And how can anyone dare to say, 'Iknow the purpose of God that is hidden in divine Scripture", unless it has been revealed to him by the Son?

Christ Himself has said that He reveals the truth to whomsoever He wishes (cf Matt. 1121). This means that Hereveals it only if we have previously resolved to receive this knowledge from Him spiritually through the keeping ofHis divine commandments; because without this anyone who claims to possess knowledge is lying. For, as St JohnKlimakos says, he speaks from conjecture, not learning authoritatively from God, even though in his conceit heboasts immeasurably. It is such a person that St Gregory the Theologian has in mind when he uses the phrases "0you great lover of wisdom" or "0 you wonderful scholar", reproaching him for his presumption in thinking he knowssomething when in fact he is ignorant. In such cases, even what he thinks he has will be taken away from him (cf.Matt. 13:12), because he is unwilling to say, 'I do not know', as all

the saints have said. Had he said that, what he lacks might have been given to him because of his humility, and givenabundantly, as it was to the saints. For the saints, though they knew, said that they did not know. As St JohnChrysostom observes, St Paul did not say, 'I have never known anything yet", but that he had never known anythingyet "as he ought to know it" (cf. 1 Cor. 8:2). Thus he

knew, but not as he should know.

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Spurious Knowledge

Spurious knowledge, or 'knowledge falsely so called" (1 Tim. 6:20), is that which a man possesses when hethinks he knows what he has never known. It is worse than complete ignorance, says St John Chrysostom, in that itsvictim will not accept correction from any teacher because he thinks that this worst kind of ignorance is in factsomething excellent. For this reason the fathers say that we ought to search the Scriptures assiduously, in humilityand with the counsel of experienced men, learning not merely theoretically but by putting into practice what weread; and that we ought not to inquire at all into what is passed over in silence by Holy Scripture.

Such enquiry is senseless, St Antony the Great tells us, speaking with reference to those who want to know aboutthe future rather than renouncing any claim to such knowledge on the grounds of their unworthmess. If God in Hisprovidence does impart such knowledge, as He did to Nebuchadnezzar (cf. Dan. 2:31-45) and Balaam (cf. Num.23:8-10), He imparts it for the benefit of all, even if some of the recipients are unworthy of the gift. In such cases, itdocs not come from the demons, especially when it is given through dreams and certain forms of imagination. Weare not told much about these things, lest we search the Scriptures simply-with our minds and then out of pride thinkthat we have grasped something. For the Lord commands that we should search the Scriptures above all by means ofbodily and moral actions, and in this way find eternal life (cf. John 5:39-40). In particular we

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should bear in mind that things have been hidden from us for our greater

humility, and so that we may not becondemned for sinning knowingly.

The man who has been enabled by grace to acquire spiritual knowledge should struggle to study the divineScriptures and this knowledge with deep dedication, humility, attention and fear of God; for unless he does this hewill be deprived of his knowledge and threatened with punishment, as unworthy of what God has given him, in thesame way as Saul was deprived of his kingdom, as St Maximos explains. But he who devotes himself to spiritualknowledge and struggles to attain it, St Maximos states, should call upon God at all times, as did David, saying:"Create in me a pure heart, 0 God, and renew an upright Spirit within me' (Ps. 51:10). In this way he may becomeworthy of God's indwelling, like the apostles who received grace 'at the third hour' (Acts 2:15). For the Spirit camedown on the apostles, as St Luke declares, at the third hour of the day, a Sunday, since Pentecost is the seventhSunday after the Sunday on which 'Pascha' is celebrated.

This Hebrew word, 'Pascha", when translated, means 'passing over' or 'freedom'; and the Sunday that followsfifty days later is therefore called 'Pentecost' or 'Fiftieth', for in the Law it marks the completion of the fifty daysthat follow Pascha. As St John the Theologian says in his Gospel, 'On that last, that great day of the feast' (John7:37), because Pentecost constitutes the conclusion of the feast of Pascha. 'The third hour received this grace', saysSt John of Damaskos. At the same time, the grace was given on "day one', the Lord's day. This signifies that weworship three persons with but a single power, that is, a single Godhead. For Sunday is called 'day one" and not thefirst day of the week, says St John Chrysostom; such is the way in which it is singled out and described

prophetically in the Old Testament. It is not simply enumerated with the other days of the week, such as the secondday and the rest. Had it not been singled out, it would have been called the 'first day', but as it is it is called "dayone' of the week (cf Gen. 1:5. LXX). In the new dispensation of grace, however, this 'holy' and 'chosen day" (Lev.23:35. LXX) is called "the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10), because on it the more lordly and masterful events in Christ'slife took place, the Annunciation, the Nativity, the Resurrection; and on this day the general resurrection of the deadwill also take place. For it was on

this day that God created the visible light, says St John of Damaskos, and it will also be the day of Christ's secondcoming. Thus it will last for limitless ages: it is both day one and the eighth day, as being outside the other sevenages that have days and nights in them.

It has been granted to us to learn about the meaning of these things from the saints. Let us then also learnthoroughly the meaning of each topic of this present work, from beginning to end. We should recite straight throughthe names of the biblical books and of the saints, so that we may continually remember their words and zealouslyimitate their lives, as St Basil the Great says; and we should make these things known to those who are ignorant ofthem. The person who already knows them will recollect them, while the person who does not know them may thusbe encouraged to search out the books in question. We mention the name of a saint or a particular book from time totime so that we may call them to mind more frequently, and by means of this brief mention may remember the actsand words of each. This also helps us to grasp the implications of scriptural passages, and to understand thediscrimination and counsel of the teacher in question. It also makes clear that what is said here, in this work, is notmine, but comes from Holy Scripture. Moreover, it increases our wonder at and comprehension of God's ineffablelove: how by means of pen and ink He has provided for the salvation of our souls, and has given us so manywritings and teachers of the Orthodox faith.

I myself marvel how I, untutored and lazy though I am, have been privileged to go through so many texts,although I have not one book of my own nor any other possession, but am always a stranger and poor; and yet I passmy time in complete ease and security, with much bodily enjoyment. If any books are left unnamed, it is because ofmy carelessness or so that my work should not grow too long. The questions and solutions I propose here withregard to our common problems are put forward to help our understanding. They are also a way of expressinggratitude to Him who has granted spiritual knowledge and discrimination to His saints, our holy fathers, and throughthem to us, unworthy though we are. They likewise help us to condemn our own weakness and ignorance.

I have said something about the righteous men of old who were saved in the midst of great wealth and amongsinners and unbelievers.

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although they were by nature the same as us. But we lack the will to attain perfection, even though we can drawupon greater experience and knowledge of good and evil, since we have learned from them and so have beengranted fuller grace and knowledge of the Scriptures. I have also mentioned details from the lives of us monks, sothat we may know that we can be saved in any situation, provided we renounce our own will. Indeed, unless we dothis, we cannot find rest, nor can we gain either knowledge of God's will or practice in fulfilling it. For our own willis a dividing wall, separating us from God: and if it is not torn down, we cannot learn and do what accords withGod's will, but are estranged from Him and tyrannized by our enemies against our will.

We must remember, too, that stillness is the highest gift of all, and that without it we cannot be purified and cometo know our weakness and the trickery of the demons; neither will we be able to understand the power of God andHis providence from the divine words that we read and sing. For we all need this devotion and stillness, total orpartial, if we are to attain the humility and spiritual knowledge necessary for the understanding of the mysterieshidden in the divine Scriptures and in all creation. We must also remember that we should not use any object or anyword, or engage in any activity or thought, that is not necessary for the life and salvation of soul and body; and that,unless we exercise discrimination, not even what appears to be good is acceptable to God, and that unless they arerightly motivated even good works are of no use to anyone.

The tropana to be found in the liturgical books are intended to assist us in understanding these books as well asother texts. In addition, as St John Klmiakos says, they stimulate compunction in people whose intellect is stillweak. For the melody, says St Basil the Great, draws the mind where it will, whether to grief or longing, to remorseor joy. Moreover, we should search the Scriptures in accordance with the Lord's commandment, so that we may findeternal life in

them (cf John 5:39); and we should pay attention to the meaning of the psalms and troparia, becomingin this way totally aware of our ignorance. For if one does not taste of knowledge, says St Basil the Great, one doesnot know how much one lacks. To promote this experience and knowledge I have described the origins

of the virtues and the passions; for thereby others may come to recognize them, and so struggle to acquire whatengenders the virtues and to expel by retaliatory action that which produces the passions. We should also and at alltimes keep a watch over our bodily activities as if they were plants, and should always give attention to the virtuesof the soul and study how we can acquire each virtue. We should leam about this from the divine Scriptures andfrom saintly men; and what we leam we should through our actions zealously and in labor of soul guard as atreasure, until we have firmly established the virtue in question. Then we should diligently begin to acquire anothervirtue, as St Basil the Great says, so as not to exhaust ourselves through trying to acquire them all at once.

We should begin by patiently enduring what befalls us and should then press on eagerly and forcefully to tacklethe other virtues, our purpose being to conform to God's will. For we should all, as Christians, keep thecommandments, since in order to acquire the virtues of the soul we need, not bodily effort, but simply probity ofintention and the desire to receive what is given, as St Basil the Great, St Gregory the Theologian and many otherssay. Yet bodily asceticism does help in the acquisition of the virtues, especially in the case of those who lead a lifeof stillness and are completely undistracted and detached. For a man cannot see his own habits and correct themunless he is free from worry about worldly things. Hence we ought first to acquire dispassion by withdrawing fromworldly affairs and human society; for only then can we begin, when the time is ripe, to look after others andadminister things without going wrong and without causing harm. This is possible only because, our detachmenthaving become a habit, we have attained total dispassion; and above all, as St John of Damaskos says,

because wehave received a call from God, as happened in the case of Moses (cf Exod. 3:4), Samuel (cf 1 Sam. 3:10) and theother prophets (cf. Isa. 6:8; Jer. 1:5), as well as the holy apostles (cf. Matt. 4:19), for the salvation of many others. StJohn of Damaskos also says that one should at first refuse to accept the call, as did Moses (cf. Exod. 3:11; 4:10),Habakkuk (cf. Bel and Dragon, verse 35), St Gregory the Theologian and others.

St Prochoros says of St John the Evangelist that he did not wish to leave his beloved stillness, even though as anapostle he was under

obligation to renounce the stillness and to proclaim the Gospel It was not in the least because he was subject to thepassions that St John took refuge in stillness, for he of all men was most free of them. He did so because he did notwant ever to be cut off from the contemplation of God or to be deprived of the great sweetness of stillness. Butothers, although dispassionate, fled into the farthest deserts out of humility, fearing confusion. St Sisois the Great isan example of this: when his disciple told him to rest, he refused to do so and said, 'Let us go where no one is to befound'; and yet he had reached such a high state of dispassion that he had become a captive of his love for God andwas no longer aware whether he ate or not.

In short, by withdrawing into complete stillness all of these men cut off their own wills. Then some of them, asdisciples, were appointed by their Teacher to instruct others, accepting the confession of their thoughts and rulingover them, either as bishops or as abbots. They received through their spiritual senses confirmation of this from theHoly Spirit Himself, when He came to dwell in them. This was what happened to the holy apostles (cf. Acts 2:3) andto those who went before them, such as Aaron (cf. Exod. 28:1; Heb. 5:4), Melchisidec (cf. Gen. 14:18; Ps. 110:4)and others. But St John of Damaskos says that he who brazenly tries to assume this status of his own accord iscondemned. For if those who shamelessly assume high office without royal authorization are severely punished,how much more so are those who audaciously take charge of what is

God's without receiving His call? This isespecially so if out of ignorance or pride they think that such an awesome task involves no danger of condemnation,imagining that it will bring them honor or ease, and not realizing that they will rather be required, when the momentcomes, to enter into an abyss of humility and death for the sake of their spiritual children and their enemies. For thisis what was done by the holy apostles - who were to the highest degree compassionate and wise - when they taughtothers.

If we do not even know that we are weak and insufficient for the task, what is to be said? For pride and ignoranceblind those who, refusing to devote themselves to God in stillness, fail to recognize their own weakness andignorance. As the Gerontikon puts it, the cell of a monk is like the furnace of Babylon in which the three holy

children found the Son of God (cf. Dan. 3:23). Again it says, 'Sit in your cell and it will teach you all things." Andthe Lord Himself says:

"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am in the midst of them' (Matt. 18:20). St JohnKlimakos exhorts us: 'Do not turn to the right or to the left, as Solomon puts it (cf Prov. 4:27), but rather travel theroyal road, living in stillness with one or two others, neither alone in the desert nor in great company; for the meanbetween these two is suited to most men.' Again he says: 'Fasting humbles the body, vigils illumine the intellect,stillness induces inward grief, and grief baptizes a man, washes his soul and frees it from sin."

On account of this the names of almost all the virtues and the passions are listed at the end of this discourse, sothat we may know how many virtues we have to acquire and how many sinful acts we have to grieve for. Forwithout grief there is no purification, and there can be no grief in the midst of continuous distraction. Withoutpurification of the soul there is no assurance; and without assurance the separation of soul and body is full ofdangers. For, as St John Klimakos has said, 'We cannot trust what still remains unknown.'

The eight stages of contemplation previously mentioned are not achieved by our own labors, but are the rewardgranted in return for our efforts to acquire the virtues. We should not try to attain these stages of contemplationsimply by reading, or by striving for them with an eagerness full of pride, as St John Klimakos says with referenceto the four highest and more perfect stages; for these stages are celestial, and an unpurified intellect is incapable ofembracing them. Instead, we should devote all our efforts to acquiring the virtues of soul and body, and in this waythe first commandment will be bom in us, that is, the fear of God. And if we persevere in this, grief will be bom aswell. For as soon as we are established in one stage of contemplation, then the grace of God, the common mother ofus all, as St Isaac calls it, will grant to us what lies beyond. This will continue until we have established the sevenstages of spiritual knowledge in ourselves; and then the eighth, which

is the work of the age to come, will be granted to those who labor diligently at the virtues with the genuine intention

of fulfilling God's will.

Each time that a godlike thought comes to us spontaneously, suddenly and without our knowing how, whether itbelongs to the first stage or whatever it may be, we should always at once abandon every worldly concern and evenour rule of prayer. We should do this in order to guard, as the apple of our eye, whatever spiritual knowledge orcompunction it may bring, until through God's providence it withdraws from us. Then, after such an experience andbefore resuming our rule, we should always meditate on what has been written about fear and grief Weak as we stillare, and inclined towards sleep and laziness, at whatever time of the night or day we have a free moment, whetherwe are involved in some handiwork, or are without occupation and so able to give ourselves entirely over to grief,we should surrender ourselves to what is said in these writings and to the tears that they induce. For they have beenwritten so that even those - especially myself - who have no experience of the things they describe may rouse

theirsluggish intellects through studying them attentively. Those who possess the purpose and the experience that comesfrom the habitual practice of the virtues know and can speak about much more than we have said in this work. Thisis the case particularly at the moment when they feel spontaneous contrition; for that moment possesses great power,far beyond our capacity.

Yet let no one think that he himself brings about these gifts of grace. Rather, he has received much more than hedeserves, and he should be deeply grateful, and should go in fear lest he incur greater condemnation because of whathas been given to him; for without laboring he has been granted the fruits for which the angels strive. Knowledge isgiven to anoint the intellect, to strengthen us in the keeping of the commandments, and to help us in the practice ofthe virtues. It is also given so that we may know how and why we practice the virtues, and what we should do andwhat we should not do, so as to avoid condemnation. For thus, borne on the wings of knowledge, we strive joyfullyand receive yet greater knowledge, strength and gladness through our strivmg; and, when this happens, we areenabled by grace to give thanks to Him who has bestowed these great blessings on us, knowing whence we havereceived them. For when

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God is thanked. He gives us still further blessings, while we, by receiving His gifts, love Him all the more andthrough this love attain that divine wisdom whose beginning is the fear of God (cf. Prov. 1:7). Fear brings aboutrepentance, says St Isaac' and through repentance comes the revelation of hidden things.

This is how we should meditate on the fear of God. After the service of Compline each of us should recite theCreed and the Lord's Prayer, and then repeat 'Lord, have mercy' many times. We should sit facing east, likesomeone mourning for the dead, moving our heads backward and forward with pain in our souls and with a grievingheart, and saying the words appropriate to our particular stage of knowledge, beginning with the first stage, until weattain the state of prayer. Then we should fall upon our face before God with inexpressible awe and should begin topray. First our prayer should be thanksgiving, then

confession of our sins, and then the other words of prayer asgiven previously. St Athanasios the Great says that we should confess the sins we have committed in ignorance, aswell as those that we would have committed had we not been saved from them by God's grace, so that these may notbe counted against us in the hour of our death. We should also pray for each other, according to the commandmentof the Lord (cf. Luke 22:32) and of the Apostle James (cf. Jas. 5:16).

The purpose of what we say in our prayers is as follows. The thanksgiving is in recognition of our incapacity to

offer thanksgiving as we should at this present moment, of our neghgence in doing so at other times, and of the factthat the present moment is a gift of God's grace. Our confession of sins proclaims that God's gifts are measurelessand that we are unable to understand them all or even to recognize them: we have only known of them from hearsay,and then not of them all. It also proclaims that we are constantly being benefited, visibly and invisibly, and thatGod's restraint in the face of our many sins cannot be put into words. We confess that, like the publican, we areunworthy even to raise our eyes to heaven (cf. Luke 18:13) and that, relying solely on His ineffable love, we falldown before Him, as Daniel, the Apostle John and the other fathers fell down before the holy angel (cf. Dan. 8:17;Rev. 1:17). We fall down with all our soul, and indeed with a certain temerity, since we

are unworthy to do even this. And we should briefly confess all the various types of sin into which we fall, so as torecall them and to grieve for them, acknowledging our own weakness so that the power of Christ may come upon us,as St Paul says (cf. 2 Cor. 12:9), and so that our many evil actions may be forgiven. We do not dare to entreat onbehalf of all, but only for our own sins. We ask that our every vice and every evil habit may be curbed, since wecannot control them, and we call upon the Almighty to restrain the impulses of our passions and not to permit us tosin against Him or against any man, so that we

may in this way find salvation through His grace.

We also pray that through the recollection of our sins we may acquire tribulation of soul and the ability to pray forothers, thereby fulfilling the commandment of St James (cf. Jas. 5:16), as well as expressing our love for all men. Bylisting the forms of passion that tyrannize us, we are led to take refuge in our Master and brought to a state ofcontrition. We pray for those whom we have distressed, and for those who have distressed us, or who will distressus, because we do not want to harbor the least trace of rancor, and because we fear that on account of our ownweakness we will not be able to endure with forbearance when the time comes, or to pray for those who mistreat us,as the Lord commands (cf. Luke 6:28). For this reason we anticipate that time and, as St Isaac says, we seek a doctorbefore becoming ill and pray before we are faced by temptation. We then pray for the departed, that they mayreceive salvation and so as to remind ourselves of our own death. It is a sign of love to pray for all men, even whenwe need the prayers of all. We also pray to be directed by God and to become what He wishes us to be; and to beunited with others, so that through their prayers we may receive mercy, all the while regarding them as superior toourselves.

We do not yet dare to seek forgiveness for all our sins, lest by minimizing our own faults we come to regardothers as unworthy of forgiveness. Ignorant, incapable of doing anything, we take refuge in Christ; and fearing Hisrighteousness because we are sinners, we ask Him to order all things as He judges best in His compassionate love.We also ask that we may not be deprived of a place at His right hand, even though we are the least of all those whoare saved and are unworthy of being numbered with them. We pray as well for the whole world, as we have beentaught to do by the Church, and that

though sinful we may be found worthy to partake of holy communion as we should, and that by praying beforetaking it we may find Him ready to help us when the moment for communion comes. We pray that we mayremember the holy Passion of our Savior and may cleave with love to this remembrance. We

pray that through thesacrament we may enter into communion with the Holy Spirit; for in this world and in the next the Paraclete Himselfsolaces those who are filled with godlike grief (cf Matt. 5:4), and who with all their soul and with many tears callupon Him for help and say, '0 heavenly King, Paraclete, the Spirit of truth...'. We pray that our participation in theundefiled mysteries may be a pledge of eternal life in Christ, through the intercessions of His Mother and of all thesaints. Then we fall down before the saints, calling upon them to make intercession for us, since they are able tobring their petitions before the Master. Then we say as usual the prayer of St Basil the Great, so wonderfullycharged with theology, asking that we may seek only the divine will and may ever bless God. After this, watchingover our thoughts with full attentiveness, at once we say three times, '0 come, let us worship and fall down beforeGod our King', in the way already described, sc that by means of prayer of the heart and meditation on the divineScripture the intellect may be purified and begin to see the mysteries hidden in Scripture.

The soul must be free from all evil, especially rancor, at the time of prayer, as the Lord Himself has told us (cf. Mark11:25). For this reason St Basil the Great, castigating contentiousness as the source of rancor, says that the abbotshould submit anyone who argues with him to as many as a thousand prostrations. He said, when giving this highfigure, 'either a thousand or one": that is, the person who answers back ought to make either a thousand prostrationsbefore God, or one before the abbot himself, saying simply, "Forgive me, father." In this way he will be absolvedwith one prostration only, but it has to be a genuine prostration, one that eradicates the passion of contentiousness.Contentiousness is alien to the Christian way of life, states St Isaac, appealing to the words of St Paul who said, 'Butif anyone wants to argue, we have no such custom among us': and so that he would not seem to be expelling thecontentious person merely on the basis of his own personal opinions, St Paul adds, "nor in the churches of God' (1Cor. 11:16). In this way everyone may know that when he argues he is outside all the churches and estranged from

God. He has need of that one marvelous act of repentance, and if he fails to make that genuinely, and so remainsunrepentant, not even a thousand prostrations will help him.

For repentance, properly speaking, is the eradication of evil, says St John Chiysostom; while what are called actsof repentance or prostrations are a bending of the knees, which expresses the fact that the person who bows sincerely

before God and man after having offended someone assumes the attitude of a servant. By doing this he can claim inself-defense that he has not answered back at all or attempted to justify himself, as did the Pharisee, but is more likethe publican in considering himself the least of all men and unworthy to lift his eyes to heaven (cf Luke 18:11-13),For if he thinks he is repentant and nevertheless attempts to refute the person who - rightly or wrongly - is judginghim, he is not worthy of the grace of forgiveness, since he acts as if he seeks a hearing in court and the opportunityto justify himself, hoping to achieve what he wants through a due process of law. Such behavior is entirely at oddswith the Lord's commandments. And naturally so; for if one attempts to justify oneself, then one is appealing tolawful rights, not to love for one's fellow-men. In such a case grace is no longer our guiding principle - the gracethat justifies the ungodly without the works of righteousness (cf. Rom. 4:5), but only on condition that we aregrateful for rebukes and endure them with forbearance, giving thanks to those who rebuke us and remaining patientand unresentful before our accusers. In this way our prayer will be pure and our repentance effective. For the morewe pray for those who slander and accuse us, the more God pacifies those who bear enmity towards us and alsogives us peace through our pure and persistent prayer.

When we make specific requests in our prayers, this is not so as to inform God, for He already knows our hearts;we make them so that we may be brought to contrition. We also do it because we desire to remain longer in Hispresence, attentively addressing yet more words to Him, giving thanks to Him, acknowledging the many blessingswe have received from Him, for as long as we can, as St John Chrysostom says of the Prophet David. For to repeatthe same or similar things again and again is not to talk garrulously or haphazardly, since, as in the case of theprophet, it is done out of longing and so that the word

of divine Scripture should be imprinted in the intellect of whoever is reading or praying. For God knows all thingsbefore they occur and does not need to be told about them. We, however,-have need of hearing things, so that wemay know what we ask for and why we arc praying, and may be filled with gratitude and cleave to God through ourentreaties. It is through such repetition that we avoid being overcome by our enemies when we are troubled inthought, for then they will not find us unmindful of Him; and it is also through it that, helped by prayer and the studyof divine Scripture, we may come to acquire the virtues about which the holy fathers have written in their variousworks, through the grace of the Holy Spirit. It is from the fathers that I myself have learned about the virtues, and Iwill give a list of them, so far as I can, even though it is not complete because of my lack of knowledge.

A List of the Virtues

The virtues are: moral judgment, self-restraint, courage, justice, faith, hope, love, fear, religious devotion, spiritualknowledge, resolution, strength, understanding, wisdom, contrition, grief, gentleness, searching the Scriptures, actsof charity, purity of heart, peace, patient endurance, self-control, perseverance, probity of intention, purposiveness,sensitivity, heedfulness, godlike stability, warmth, alertness, the fervor of the Spirit, meditation, diligence,watchfulness, mindfulness, reflection, reverence, shame, respect, penitence, refraining from evil, repentance, returnto God, allegiance to Christ, rejection of the devil, keeping of the commandments, guarding of the soul, purity ofconscience, remembrance of death, tribulation of soul, the doing of good actions, effort, toil, an austere life, fasting,vigils, hunger, thirst, frugality, self-sufficiency, orderliness, gracefulness, modesty, reserve, disdain of money,unacquisitiveness, renunciation of worldly things, submissiveness, obedience, compliance, poverty,possessionlessness, withdrawal from the world, eradication of self-will, denial of self, counsel, magnanimity,devotion to God, stillness, discipline,

sleeping on a hard bed, abstinence from washing oneself, service, struggle,attentiveness, the eating of uncooked food.

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A List of the Virtues

nakedness, the wasting of one's body, solitude, quietude, calmness, cheerfulness, fortitude, boldness, godlike zeal,fervency, progress, folly for Christ, watchfulness over the intellect, moral integrity, holiness, virginity,sanctification, purity of body, chasteness of soul, reading for Christ's sake, concern for God, comprehension,friendliness, truthfulness, uninquisitiveness, uncensonousness, forgiveness of debts, good management, skilfulness,acuity, fairness, the right use of things, cognitive insight, good-naturedness, experience, psalmody, prayer,thanksgiving, acknowledgment, entreaty, kneeling, supplication, intercession, petition, appeal, hymnody, doxology,confession, solicitude, mourning, affliction, pain, distress, lamentation, sighs of sorrow, weeping, heart-rendingtears, compunction, silence, the search for God, cries of anguish, lack of. anxiety about all things, forbearance, lackof self-esteem, disinterest in glory, simplicity of soul, sympathy, self-retirement, goodness of disposition, activitiesthat accord with nature, activities exceeding one's natural capacity, brotherly love, concord, communion in God,sweetness, a spiritual disposition, mildness, rectitude, innocence, kindliness, guilelessness, simplicity, good repute,speaking well of others, good works, preference of one's neighbor, godlike tenderness, a virtuous character,consistency, nobility, gratitude, humility, detachment, dignity, forbearance, long-suffering, kindness, goodness,discrimination, accessibility, courtesy, tranquility, contemplation, guidance, reliability, clearsightedness, dispassion,spiritual joy, sureness, tears of understanding, tears of soul, a loving desire for God, pity, mercy, compassion, purityof soul, purity of intellect, prescience, pure prayer, passion-free thoughts, steadfastness, fitness of soul and body,illumination, the recovery of one's soul, hatred of life, proper teaching, a healthy longing for death, childhkeness inChrist, rootedness, admonition and encouragement, both moderate and forcible, a praiseworthy ability to change,ecstasy towards God, perfection in Christ, true enlightenment, an intense longing for God. rapture of intellect,

theindwelling of God, love of God, love of inner wisdom, theology, a true confession of faith, disdain of death.

saintliness, successful accomplishment, perfect health of soul, virtue, praise from God, grace, kingship, adoption tosonship - altogether 228 virtues. To acquire all of them is possible only through the grace of Him who grants usvictory over the passions.

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A List of the Passions

The passions are: harshness, trickery, malice, perversity, mindlessness, licentiousness, enticement, dullness, lackof understanding, idleness, sluggishness, stupidity, flattery, silliness, idiocy, madness, derangement, coarseness,rashness, cowardice, lethargy, dearth of good actions, moral errors, greed, over-frugality, ignorance, folly, spuriousknowledge, forgetfulness, lack of discrimination, obduracy, injustice, evil intention, a conscienceless soul,slothfulness, idle chatter, breaking of faith, wrongdoing, sinfulness, lawlessness, criminality, passion, seduction,assent to evil, mindless coupling, demonic provocation, dallying, bodily comfort beyond what is required, vice,stumbling, sickness of soul, enervation, weakness of intellect, negligence, laziness, a reprehensible despondency,disdam of God, aberration, transgression, unbelief, lack of faith, wrong belief, poverty of faith, heresy, fellowship inheresy, polytheism, idolatry, ignorance of God, impiety, magic, astrology, divination, sorcery, denial of God, thelove of idols, dissipation, profligacy, loquacity, indolence, self-love, mattentiveness, lack of progress, deceit,delusion, audacity, witchcraft, defilement, the eating of unclean food, soft living, dissoluteness, voracity, unchastity,avarice, anger, dejection, listless-ness, self-esteem, pride, presumption, self-elation, boastfulness, infatuation,foulness, satiety, doltishness, torpor, sensuality, overeating, gluttony, insatiability, secret eating, hoggishness,solitary eating, indifference, fickleness, self-will, thoughtlessness, self-satisfaction, love of popularity, ignorance ofbeauty, uncouthness, gauchene, lightmmdedness, boorishness, rudeness, contentiousness, quarrelsomeness,abusiveness, shouting, brawling, fighting, rage, mindless

desire, gall, exasperation, giving offence, enmity,meddlesomeness, chicanery, asperity, slander, censure, calumny, condemnation, accusation, hatred, railing,insolence, dishonor, ferocity, frenzy, severity, aggressiveness, forswearing oneself, oathtakmg, lack of compassion,hatred of one's brothers, partiality, patricide, matricide, breaking fasts, laxity, acceptance of bribes, theft, rapine,jealousy, strife, envy, indecency, jesting, vilification, mockery, derision, exploitation, oppression, disdain of one'sneighbor, flogging, making sport of others, hanging, throttling, heartlessness, implacability, covenant-breaking.

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bewitchment, harshness, shamelessness, impudence, obfuscation of thoughts, obtuseness, mental blindness,attraction to what is fleeting, impassionedness, frivolity, disobedience, duUwittedness, drowsiness of soul, excessivesleep, fantasy, heavy drinking, drunkenness, uselessness, slackness, mindless enjoyment, self-indulgence, venery,using foul language, effeminacy, unbridled desire, burning lust, masturbation, pimping, adultery, sodomy, bestiality,defilement, wantonness, a stained soul, incest, uncleanlmess, pollution, sordidness, feigned affection, laughter,jokes, immodest dancing, clapping, improper songs, revelry, fluteplaying, license of tongue, excessive love of order,insubordination, disorderlmess, reprehensible collusion, conspiracy, warfare, killing, brigandry, sacrilege, illicitgains, usury, wiliness, grave-robbing, hardness of heart, obloquy, complaining, blasphemy, fault-finding,ingratitude, malevolence, contemptuousness, pettiness, confusion, lying, verbosity, empty words, mindless joy, day-dreaming, mindless friendship, bad habits, nonsensicality, silly talk, garrulity, niggardliness, depravity, intolerance,irritability, affluence, rancor, misuse, ill-temper, clinging to life, ostentation, affectation, love of power,dissimulation, irony, treachery, frivolous talk, pusillanimity, satanic love, curiosity, contumely, lack of the fear ofGod, unteachabihty, senselessness, haughtiness, self- vaunting, self- inflation, scorn for one's neighbor,mercilessness, insensitivity, hopelessness, spiritual paralysis, hatred of God, despair, suicide, a falling away fromGod in all things, utter destruction - altogether 298 passions.

These, then, are the passions which I have found named in the Holy Scriptures. I have set them down in a single list,as I did at the beginning of my discourse with the various books I have used. I have not tried, nor would I have beenable, to arrange them all in order; this would have been beyond my powers, for the reason given by St JohnKlimakos: "If you seek understanding in wicked men, you will not find it." For all that the demons produce isdisorderly. In common with the godless and the unjust, the demons have but one purpose: to destroy the souls ofthose who accept their evil counsel. Yet sometimes they actually help men to attain holiness. In such instances theyare conquered by the patience and faith of those who put their trust in the Lord, and who through their good actionsand resistance to evil thoughts counteract the demons and bring down curses upon them.

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The Difference between ThoughtsAnd Provocations

Our thoughts differ greatly one from the other. Some are altogether free from sin. Others do not initially involvesin: this is the case with what are called provocations, hi other words, conceptions of either good or evil, which inthemselves are neither commendable nor reprehensible. What follows on these is known as 'coupling": that is to say,we begin to entertain a particular thought and parley with it, so to speak; and this leads us either to give assent to itor to reject it. Our reaction to the thought, if in accordance with God's will, is praiseworthy, though not highly so;

but if it accords with evil, then it deserves censure. After this comes the stage at which our intellect wrestles with thethought, and either conquers it or is conquered by it; and this brings the intellect either credit or punishment whenthe thought is put into action. The same is true with what is called assent: this is a pleasurable inclination of the soultowards what it sees; and it leads to the state of seduction, or captivity, in which the heart is induced forcibly andunwillingly to put the thought into effect.

When the soul dallies for a long time with an impassioned thought there arises what we call a passion. This in itsturn, through its intercourse with the soul,

becomes a settled disposition within us, compelling the soul to move ofits own accord towards the corresponding action. Where passion is concerned, unquestionably and invariably wemust either repent proportionately or else undergo punishment in the age to come, as St John KHmakos states. Weare punished for our lack of repentance, and not because we had to struggle against temptation; otherwise most of uscould not receive forgiveness until we had attained total dispassion. But as St John Klimakos again observes, "It isnot possible for all to achieve dispassion, yet all can be saved and reconciled with God.'

An intelligent person, aware of all this, will thus reject the initial malicious provocation, mother of all evil, so thathe may cut off at one stroke all its pernicious consequences. But he is always ready to put

the good provocation into effect, so that his soul and body may gi'ow firmly disposed to virtue and be delivered fromthe passions through the grace of Christ. For we have nothing that we have not received from Him (cf. 1 Cor. 4:7),nor can we offer Him anything except our faculty of free choice. If we lacked this, we would not possess theknowledge or the strength to do what is good. Yet even this faculty of free choice is given to us by God in His love,so that we may not be condemned as incapable of doing anything. For idleness is the source of all evil.

Moreover, according to the Gerontikon, even the doing of what is good requires discrimination. For the virginwho fasted for six days in each week, and constantly studied the Old and New Testaments, did not look withdetachment on what is pleasant and what is unpleasant. After such labors she ought to have attained the state ofdispassion, but this did not happen; for the good is not good unless its purpose is conformed to God's will. On manyoccasions in divine Scripture God is grieved with someone who is doing something that appears to all to be good,and He looks favorably on someone who appears to be doing evil. A case in point is that of the prophet who askedsomeone to strike him; when the man refused he was eaten by a wild beast, although he had acted in a way that

wasostensibly good (cf. 1 Kgs. 20:35-36). St Peter, too, thought he was acting rightly when he refused to have his feetwashed, but he was rebuked for this (cf. John 13:8). Hence we should do all we can to discern the will of God and todo it, whether it corresponds to what we think good or not. Thus the doing of good is not to be accomplished withouteffort on our part; for in this way we are deprived neither of our freedom of choice nor of the praise we earn forexerting pressure on ourselves. In short, all that God arranges is admirable, beyond the grasp of intellect andthought.

We must admire not only the inner meaning of all the things that are celebrated in the Church of the OrthodoxChristians, but also the sacramental actions through which this meaning is expressed: how through divine baptism

we become sons of God by grace; though we have done nothing before this, and do nothing after except keep thecommandments; and how these awesome mysteries-I refer to holy baptism and holy communion-cannot take placewithout the

priesthood, as St John Chrysostom says. Here, too, we see the significance of the power given to St Peter, chief ofthe apostles; for if the gates of the kingdom of heaven are not opened by priestly action, no one can enter (cf Matt16:19). As the Lord says: 'Unless a man is bom of water and the Spirit..." (John 3:5); and again: "Unless you eat theflesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53).

In the same way we must reflect with wonder how the outer part of the temple of the Old Covenant, where thepriests performed sacrifices, was an image of the cosmos (cf. 1 Kgs. 8:64), while within there was the Holy ofHolies (cf. Exod. 30:10; Heb. 9:3), in which was offered the incense made of four components, fragrant gum, myrrh,balsam and cassia, which represent the four universal virtues. The ceremonies performed in the outer part were aconcession accorded by God, so that the Jews, with their childlike mentality, might not be led astray

by songs andreveling to the worship of idols. But the Church of the New Covenant is the image of the blessings held in store, andfor this reason what is accomplished within it is spiritual and heavenly. For just as there are nine orders in heaven, sothere are nine orders in the Church; patriarchs, metropolitans, bishops, priests, deacons, subdeacons, readers, singersand monks.

Then we should also marvel how demons and various diseases are dispelled by the sign of the precious and life-giving Cross, which all can make without cost or effort. Who can number the panegyrics composed in its honor?The holy fathers have handed down to us the inner significance of this sign, so that we can refute heretics andunbelievers. The two fingers and single hand with which it is made represent the Lord Jesus Christ crucified, and Heis thereby acknowledged to exist in two-natures and one hypostasis or person. The use of the right hand betokensHis infinite power and the fact that He sits at the right hand of the Father. That the sign begins with a downwardmovement from above signifies His descent to us from heaven. Again, the movement of the hand from the right sideto the left drives away our enemies and declares that by His invincible

power the Lord overcame the devil, who is on the left side, dark and lacking strength.

Again, we must marvel how through little strokes of color paintings show us so many wonderful things performedover so many years by our Lord and all His saints, making them look as if they had only just been performed. Thiscomes about through God's providence, so that by becoming eyewitnesses, as it were, of these things, our longingfor God may grow even greater, as St Peter, chief of the apostles, says in the account of the martyrdom of hisdisciple Pankratios.

All that has been said from the beginning of this discourse is of no benefit to anyone without the true faith; norcan it be put into practice without faith, just as there is no faith without works (cf. Jas. 2:20). Many of the holyfathers have written concerning faith and works. As a concluding reminder I shall say briefly

that, to whatever orderwe belong, we ought all of us to undertake the works I have written about, as well as holding fast to the Orthodoxfaith we have received from the saints I have cited, so that with them we may attain eternal blessings through thegrace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom rightly belong honor and worship, together with His unonginateFather and His all-holy, blessed and life-giving Spirit, now and always and through all the ages. Amen.

Having completed this I said: 'Christ, glory is rightly Thine.'

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1Spiritual Wisdom

In all languages the first letter of the alphabet is A, though some people are unaware of this. Similarly, the first ofall the virtues is spiritual wisdom, though it is also their consummation. For if the intellect is not imbued withspiritual wisdom, no one can accomplish anything of value, for he will not even have learnt what is of value. But ifhe has been enabled by grace to learn something about this, he will to that extent possess wisdom. Yet althoughlearning the alphabet is something elementary, unless we learn it we cannot proceed to any more advanced study. Inthe same way, although our first steps in spiritual knowledge may be very slight, unless we make them we will notacquire any virtue at all. Because of this I am afraid to write anything about wisdom, since I am entirely lacking init.

It seems to me that there are four things which make the intellect articulate: first, supranatural grace andblessedness; second, the purity that comes from the practice of the virtues and that restores the soul to its pristinebeauty; third, experience of the lower forms of teaching, through human education and secular learning; fourth, the

accursed and satanic delusion that works in us through pride and demonic cunning, and distorts our nature. I have noshare in any of these things. So how can I write? Perhaps the faith of you who in your devotion to God urge me

towrite will bring grace to my pen; for my intellect and my hand are unworthy and impure. I know from experiencethat this can happen. For, fathers, whenever I have wanted to write something I have not been able to formulate it inmy intellect

until I have actually picked up my pen. Frequently it was some small thought suggested by Scripture, or something Ihad heard or seen in this world, that set my mind to work; but as soon as I took up my pen and began to write, atonce I discovered what I needed to say. It is as if someone is forcing me to write the thing down; and when thishappens I begin to write freely and without anxiety for as long as my hand holds out. If God puts something into mydarkened heart, I write it down without thinking. This prevents me from imagining that I am the source of what Ihave received through the prayers of another, as St John Klimakos puts it, basing himself on St Paul's words: "Whatdo you have which you did not receive? Now if you received it, why do you boast, as if you had not received it?' (1Cor. 4:7) - as if, that is to say, you were yourself the author of it.

According to St Isaac the ideas that arise spontaneously in the intellect of those who have attained a state ofstillness, free from discursive thought, are to be accepted. But what comes from discursive thought is a purelysubjective and individual notion. St Antony says that every word or act ought to be supported by divine Scripture. Itis in this spirit that I begin to write, just as the ass of Balaam began to talk (cf. Num. 22:28-30). I do this not in orderto teach others - God forbid! - but in order to reprove my unhappy soul, so that, shamed by my own words, as StJohn Klimakos says, I who have done nothing but speak may begin to act. Who knows whether I shall live and havethe strength to write? Or whether you will be able to carry out what I say? But let us both begin to do both things,each to the extent of his own ability. For we do not know when we will die and. when our end will come. But Godwho foreknows all things knows about us as well. To Him be glory through all the ages. Amen.

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//The Two Kinds of Faith

St Paul said that faith was the basis of all actions that conform to God's will, and that we have received it throughholy baptism by the grace of Christ and not through works (cf Col. 1:23; Rom. 11:6). According to St Isaac, this isthe first kind of faith, and it engenders the fear that is inherent in it. Such fear leads us to keep the commandmentsand patiently to endure trials and temptations, as St Maxmios has explained. Then, after we have begun to act in thisway, a second kind of faith is bom in us, the great faith of contemplation, to which the Lord was referring when Hesaid; "If you have faith as a mustard seed... nothing will be impossible for you" (Matt. 17:20). Thus there is, first, theordinary faith of all Orthodox Christians, that is to say, correct doctrinal belief concerning God and His creation,both visible and invisible, as the Holy Catholic Church, by God's grace, has received it; and there is, second, thefaith of contemplation or spiritual knowledge, which is not in any way opposed to the first kind of faith; on thecontrary, the first gives birth to the second, while the second strengthens the first.

We acquire the first kind of faith through hearing about it, inheriting it from devout parents and teachers of theOrthodox faith; but the second is engendered in us by our true belief and by our fear of the Lord in whom we havecome to believe. For because of this fear we have chosen to keep the commandments and so have resolved topractice the virtues that pertain to the body-stillness, fasting, moderate vigils, psalmody, prayer, spiritual reading,and the questioning of those with experience about all our thoughts, words, or undertakings. We practice thesevirtues so that the body may be purified of the worst passions -gluttony, unchastity and superfluous possessions -and so that we may be content with what we have, as the apostle puts it (cf. Heb. 13:5).

It is in this way that a man finds the strength to devote himself undistractedly to God. He learns from theScriptures and from people of experience about divine doctrines and commandments, and he

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begins to reject the rest of the eight leading passions. Perceiving the punishments that threaten man, he is not merelyafraid of God: he fears Him as God, in the words of St Neilos. As a consequence of this fear he begins to keep thecommandments with true knowledge of why he does so. And the more he endures voluntary death for the sake ofeach commandment, the more he enters into greater knowledge and contemplates what is taking place in himselfthrough the grace of Christ. As a result he comes to believe that the Orthodox faith is truly glorious, and he begins tolong to do God's will. He no longer has any doubts about God's help, but "casts his burden upon the Lord" (Ps. 55:22). As St Basil the Great says, he who wishes to acquire the higher kind of faith should not worry about his ownlife or death: even if faced by a wild beast or attacked by demons or evil men, he should not be at all afraid, since heknows that they are all the creatures of a single Creator and are co-servants with him, and would have no poweragainst him if God did not allow it. He should fear God alone, for He alone has power.

This is made clear by the Lord Himself when He says: 'I will warn you whom to fear', continuing: 'Fear Himwho has the power to cast both soul and body into hell"; and in order to confirm His words. He says: "Yes, I tell you.

fear Him' (cf. Luke 12:5). He has good reason to say this; for if someone else apart from God had power, we oughtto fear him; but since God alone is the Creator and Master of things above and things below, who can do anythingwithout Him? If someone says that there are creatures that possess free will, 1 too agree that angels and men, as wellas the demons, do indeed possess it. But the angelic orders and good men cannot bear to inflict any harm at all onone of their fellow-servants, even though he is very evil; instead, they feel compassion for him and entreat God onhis behalf, as St Athanasios the Great says. As for evil men and their teachers in evil, the demons, they wouldcertainly like to harm others, but are utterly unable to do so, unless the person in question

has himself caused God toabandon him through his own sinful actions. Yet even this occurs for the sake of his instruction and salvation at thehands of the all-bountiful God, provided, that is to say, he is willing to accept God's correction of his smfulness withthankful endurance. If he refuses to do this, then God's action proves of benefit to someone else, since God desiresthe salvation of everyone.

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The trials and temptations of righteous and holy men take place with God's consent and contribute both to theperfecting of their souls and to the shaming of their enemies, the demons. Thus when the person who carries outChrist's commandments becomes aware of these things, he does not believe simply that Christ is God and that Hehas power; for even the demons realize this because of His actions and they shudder (cf. Jas. 2:19). On the contrary,he believes that all things are possible for Christ, that His every will is good, and that without Him nothing good canhappen. It is for this reason that such a person does not want to do anything contrary to the divine will, even if it is aquestion of saving his life; though, of course, it is impossible to save one's life unless one does perform God's will,for this divine will is eternal life (cf. John 12:50), the greatest of blessings, even if the effort needed to attain itappears to some to be arduous.

Because of this I in my wretchedness am worse than the infidel, for 1 am unwilling to make efforts to find thatgreater faith and through it to come to the fear of God, the beginning of the wisdom of the Spirit (cf. Prov. 1:7). Attimes 1 deliberately close my soul's eyes and transgress the law; at other times 1 am blinded by forgetfulness andenter a state of total ignorance: unaware of what profits my soul 1 fall into bad habits and become an inveteratesinner. As a result, even if 1 want to return whence 1 fell, 1 cannot do so, since my own will has become a dividingwall between myself and God, as the holy fathers say, and 1 have no wish to exert myself in order to destroy it. Had 1the faith that comes from performing works of repentance, 1 would be able to say, 'With the help of my God 1 willleap over the wall" (Ps. 18:29. LXX). 1 would not hesitate out of

cowardice, asking myself what will happen to me if1 rush over this wall, and whether there may not be a pit on the other side, and what 1 will do if 1 cannot get over,and fall headlong backwards again after my efforts, and many other questions of this kind. Such questions nevereven occur to someone who has faith that God is close at hand and not far off (cf. Jer. 23:23), and who in hisdetermination to attain his end advances directly towards God, source of all strength, power, goodness and love,acting not like one who "beats the air' (cf. 1 Cor. 9:26), but like a swimmer. He aspires to the realm above and,leaving all self-will

behind, journeys towards the divine wiU until he hears "new tongues' and even perhaps speaks with them (cf Mark16:17), perceiving the mysteries. So he gains, or rather he is given, the power to ascend from the practice of thevirtues to the state of contemplation, through the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom belong all glory,honor and dominion throughout the ages. Amen.

Gluttony is the first of the eight champions of evil. But fear of God, which is the first commandment, defeats alleight of them, while without this fear one cannot possess any blessing. For how can the person who feels no fearkeep the commandment, unless indeed he has already attained the state of love? Even he who has attained the stateof love began with fear, though he may not know how this initial fear passed from him. Should someone say that hehas reached the

state of love by some other path, he has been taken captive either by spiritual joy or by his ownobduracy, so that he is like someone crossing a river while asleep, as St Ephrem puts it. The man seized by spiritualjoy is astounded by the many blessings that God in his grace has bestowed on him, and he loves his Benefactor. Buthe who obdurately indulges in luxury and splendor, like the rich man (cf. Luke 16:19), thinks that those consumedby fear and facing trials and temptation suffer in this way because of their sins, and in his comfort and complacencyhe despises them. He imagines that he deserves his easy life, although in fact he does not deserve it at all; for,blinded by his inane love for the ephemeral, he has made himself unworthy of the life held in store. He may eventhink that he has attained the state of love and on account of this has received greater benefits than others have. Thisshows that he is totally unaware of God's forbearance towards him. For this reason he will find himself defenselesson the day of judgment and deservedly will hear the words, 'You received your good things during your lifetime'(Luke 16:25). All this is obvious from the fact that there are many non-believers of this type, who are benefited byGod without deserving it;

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yet no one with any sense would call them blessed or say that they are worthy of being loved by God, or that theylove God and perhaps on this account live comfortably in the present life.

But to return to the question of the fear of God. Like faith, fear is of two kinds: the first is introductory, while thesecond, which grows out of the first, is perfect. He who is afraid of God's punishment has a slave-like fear of God,and it is this that makes him refrain from evil: "Out of fear of the Lord men shun evil' (Prov. 16:6. LXX); "I willteach you the fear of the Lord" (Ps. 34:11). According to St Dorotheos, these and similar things are said with regardto the introductory fear,

so that through fear of what threatens us we sinners may be led to' repent and may seek tofind deliverance from our sins. Moreover, when it is active within us, this introductory fear teaches us the way thatleads to life, for it is said: "Shun evil, and do good" (Ps. 34:14).

The more a man struggles to do good, the more fear grows in him, until it shows him his slightest faults, thosewhich he thought of as nothing while he was still in the darkness of ignorance. When fear in this way has becomeperfect, he himself becomes perfect through inward grief: he no longer desires to sin but, fearing the return of thepassions, he remains in this pure fear invulnerable. As the psalm puts it, "The fear of the Lord is pure, and enduresfor ever" (Ps. 19:9. LXX). The first kind of fear is not pure, for it arises in us because of our sins. But, independentof sin, the person who has been purified continues to feel fear, not because he sins, but because, being human, he ischangeable and prone to evil. In his humility, the further he advances through the acquisition of the virtues, the morehe fears. This is natural; for everyone who possesses wealth greatly fears loss, punishment, dishonor, and theconsequent fall from his high estate. The poor man, on the contrary, is on the whole without fear: he is only afraid ofbeing beaten.

What has just been said applies to those who are entirely perfect and pure in soul and body. But if someone is stillstumbling, even though his sins are of the slightest and most insignificant kind, let him not mislead himself bythinking that his fear is pure. For if he does think this, he is deceived, as St John Klimakos states: his fear is notpure, nor is it humility. It is but servile prudence and fear of

punishments threatened. Thus such a person's thoughts need to be corrected, so that he may learn what kind of fearhe is subject to, and through the deepest grief and by patiently enduring affliction may purify himself of sins, and inthis way through Christ's grace may attain perfect fear. The sign of the first kind of fear is

hatred of sin and angertowards it, like someone wounded by a wild beast. The sign of perfect fear is the love of virtue and the fear ofrelapsing, since no one is unalterable.

Thus in every situation throughout this present life we ought always to be afraid of falling; for we see the greatking and prophet David mourning for his two sins (cf Ps. 51;2 Sam. 11:1-17), and Solomon himself giving way togrievous evil (cf. 1 Kgs. 11:1-10). As St Paul said: 'Let anyone who thinks he stands firm take care lest he fall' (1Cor. 10:12). If someone says that, according to St John, Tove casts out fear' (1 John 4:18), he is right; but this refers

to the first, the introductory fear. Concerning perfect fear David has said: 'Blessed is the man who fears the Lordand who greatly delights in His commandments' (Ps. 112:1), that is, who greatly cherishes virtue. Such a person hasthe status of a son, for he cherishes virtue not out of fear of punishment, but because of the love that "casts out fear".This is why he 'greatly delights', unlike the slave who carries out orders under constraint because of his fear ofpunishment. From this punishment may we all be saved, through the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, towhom belong all glory, honor and worship throughout the ages. Amen.

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IVTrue Piety and Self-Control

It is clear that true piety embraces a great variety of things, as does secular philosophy. For philosophypresupposes the completion of ten different branches of learning, embracing not just one or two of these branchesbut all ten together. Similarly, true piety consists not in the possession of a single virtue alone, but in the keeping ofall the commandments. In its Greek form, the term "true piety" comes from a word meaning "to serve well". If somepeople say that "to serve well'

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is the same thing as faith, let them explain how it is possible to fear the Lord before believing in Him. Does one notfirst believe in the Lord and then fear Him? Hence faith gives rise to fear, and from fear comes true piety. Theprophet Isaiah indicates that this is the correct sequence: starting with wisdom, he proceeds in a descending order,referring to "the spirit of knowledge and true piety", and last of all to "the spirit of the fear of God" (Isa. 11:2-3.LXX). The Lord Himself starts with fear and then guides the man who possesses this fear to a state of inward grief.

This is not the moment to speak systematically about every form of true piety or spiritual activity. Leaving to oneside the ascetic practices pertaining to the body that precede the acquisition both of the higher kind of faith and ofpure fear - for everyone knows what these practices are - I will speak of the trees of the spiritual paradise, that is,with the help of God's grace I will speak briefly about the virtues of the soul. Of these, the most all-embracing isself-control, by which I mean abstinence from all the passions. There is also another, more partial form of self-control, that applies to bodily actions and teaches us the proper use of food and drink. Here, however, I am referringto the self-control that applies, as I said, to the passions and that restrains every thought and every movement of thelimbs that is not in harmony with God's will. The person who possesses this virtue does not tolerate any thought orword, any movement of hand or foot or of any other member of the body, unless it is essential to the life of the bodyor to the soul's salvation.

It is after the acquisition of this virtue that the trials and temptations incited by the demons muhiply, for they seebefore them an embodied angel, wholeheartedly committed to doing what is right and good. This is what is meant bythe command given to man in paradise, 'to cultivate and to keep it" (Gen. 2:15); for self-control needs to becultivated and guarded ceaselessly, so as to prevent any of the passions that are outside the garden from stealthilycreeping in. As I have said, the two forms of self-control or self-restraint are not identical, for while the first curbsunchastity and the other shameful passions, the second controls even the slightest thought, bringing it undersurveillance before it can

lead to sin, and then conducting it to God.

No one can speak or learn about this with precision merely through hearsay; it is only through experience that onecan come to understand and counteract all these things that so disturb the intellect. How, indeed, is it possiblemerely by giving things a name to resurrect the

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dust and to make the material immaterial? Names are one thing, and secular learning, on the basis of etymology, canprovide one with knowledge about them. But the experience and acquisition of the virtues require God's help; andthey are achieved only through much effort and over a long period of time. This is especially true of the virtues ofthe soul, for these are the more inward and essential virtues. The virtues that pertain to the body - which are betterdescribed as the tools of the virtues - are easier to acquire, even though they do demand bodily effort. But the virtuesof the soul, although they demand the control of thought alone, are much more difficult to achieve. Because of thisthe Law says first: 'Watch yourself attentively" (Exod. 23:21. LXX). St Basil the Great has written an excellenttreatise on this phrase.

But what shall we say, we who are not attentive at all? We are like the Pharisees. Some of us may fast and keepvigil and perform other such things, and we may often do this with partial understanding. But we lack discriminationbecause we do not pay attention to ourselves and do not know what it is that is being asked of us. Nor are we willingto give persistent and patient attention to our thoughts, so as to gain experience from our many trials and battles, andthus become for others at least an experienced sailor, if not a captain. Although we are all of us blind, we claim thatwe ourselves see, as the Pharisees claimed. That is why it is said, that they will be judged more severely (cf. John9:41). For if we acknowledged our blindness, we should not be condemned; it would be enough for us to be gratefuland to admit our failure and ignorance. But, alas, we shall

receive the greater condemnation, as did the paganGreeks; for, according to Solomon, they aspired after so many things and yet failed to attain what they sought.Should we therefore keep silence, as though there was nothing for us to do? That would be even worse. Let us ratherrebuke ourselves, for it is shameful even to mention the things that we do in secret (cf Eph. 5:12). Hence I will saynothing about such things, but will speak about the virtues that so deserve our esteem. For the recollection of theirsweetness fills my darkened heart with pleasure, and I forget my limitations and am no longer troubled about thecondemnation that awaits me if 1 speak and do not act.

Self-control, then, and self-restraint have the same power and are

twofold, as has been said. But now 1 want to say something further about their more perfect form. He who byGod's grace enjoys the great faith of contemplation together with pure and divine fear, and who wishes on the basisof these to keep possession of self-control and self-restraint, should first master himself both outwardly andinwardly, acting as if he were already dead in soul and body as regards this world and all other men. In everycircumstance he should say to himself: "Who am I? What is my existence? Nothing but abomination. For I start asearth and I end as putrefaction, and in between I am filled with all manner of insolence and worse. What is my life?And how long? A single hour and then death comes. Why do I bother about this and that? Already I am dying. ForChrist controls both life and death. Why do I worry and strive in vain? All one needs is a bit of bread: why seekmore? If I have this, there is nothing to worry about. If I don't, it may be that in my ignorance I do worry about it;yet it is God who provides.'

For these reasons every man should make it his whole concern to guard his senses and his thoughts, so as not todevise or do anything that does not seem to be in accordance with God's will. Let him prepare himself to acceptpatiently the

things that befall him at the hands of men and demons, whether these things are pleasant or unpleasant.Neither the one nor the other should excite him or make him give way either to senseless joy and presumption, or todejection and despair. He should entertain no over-confident thought until the Lord comes. To Him be glorythroughout the ages. Amen.

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VPatient Endurance

The Lord said: 'He who endures patiently to the end will be saved' (Matt. 10:22). Patient endurance is theconsolidation of all the virtues, because without it not one of them can subsist. For whoever turns back is not 'fit forthe kingdom of heaven' (Luke 9:62). Indeed, even though someone thinks that he is in possession of all the virtues,he is still not fit for the kingdom until he has first endured to the end and escaped from the snares of the devil; foronly thus can he

attain it. Even those who have received a foretaste of the kingdom stand in need of patient endurance if they are togain their final reward in the age to be. Indeed, in every form of learning and knowledge persistence is needed. Thisis natural, since even sensible things cannot be produced without it: when any such thing is bom, there has to be aperiod of patient waiting if it is to continue to live.

In short, patient endurance is required before anything can come about; and, once something has come about, itcan be sustained and brought to perfection only through such endurance. If it is something good, this virtue assistsand guards it; if something evil, it confers relief and strength of soul and does not permit the person being tempted togrow faint-hearted, thus experiencing a

foretaste of hell. Patient endurance kills the despair that kills the soul; itteaches the soul to take comfort and not to grow listless in the face of its many battles and afflictions.

Judas lacked this virtue, and because of his inexperience in spiritual warfare suffered a double death (cf. Matt.27:5j. Peter, chief of the apostles, possessed it, being an experienced warrior; and when he fell, he defeated the devilwho had overthrown him (cf. Matt. 26:75; John 21:15-17). The monk who once lapsed into unchastity acquired it,and conquered his conqueror by not yielding to the counsel of despair that urged him to abandon his cell and hissolitude. Patiently he said to the thoughts that tempted him: "I have not sinned; and again I say to you, I have notsinned." What divine understanding and patience in that noble man! This blessed virtue brought the righteous Joband his initial good works to fulfillment; for had he lacked it even slightly, he would have obliterated all the good hehad previously done. But God who knew his patience allowed the plague to strike him for his own perfecting and forthe benefit of many others.

He, then, who knows what is to his benefit should struggle to acquire this virtue before anything else, accordmg toSt Basil the Great. For St Basil advises us not to fight against all the passions at once, since if we are unsuccessfulwe might turn back and no longer be fit for the kingdom of heaven. Rather we should fight the passions one at atime, and start by patiently enduring whatever befalls us. This is right; for the person who lacks patient endurancewill never be able

to stand fast even in an ordinary, battle, but will bring only flight and destruction upon himself and others byretreating. This is why God told Moses not to allow anyone who was cowardly to go out with the army (cf. Deut.20:8). In an ordinary war it may be possible for someone to remain inside in his house and not go out to fight; andthough by doing this he loses gifts and honors, he may live on in poverty and dishonor. But in spiritual warfare it isimpossible to fmd a

place anywhere in creation in which a battle is not being waged. In the desert there are wildbeasts and demons and other malefic and terrifying things; in places of solitude and stillness there are demons, trialsand temptations; in the midst of human company there are demons and men who try one and tempt one. There is noplace anywhere where one is unmolested; and, because of this, without patient endurance it is impossible to find

peace.

Such endurance is bom of fear and faith, though it originates in understanding. He who is sensible tests things inthe light of his intellect and, when he finds that he is 'hemmed in on every side" - to use Susanna's words - hechooses what is better, as she did. For she said to God: "I am hemmed in on every side. If I do the will of the lawlesspriests, my soul will perish because of my adultery; but if I disobey them, they will accuse me of adultery and asjudges of the people will condemn me to death. It is better for me to take refuge in the Almighty, even if deathawaits me' (cf. Sus., verses 22-23). How great was the wisdom of that blessed woman! For as soon as the people hadgathered together and the lawless judges had sat down to accuse her, blameless as she was, and to condemn her todeath as an adulteress, then Daniel, though only twelve years old, was shown by God to be a prophet and saved herfrom death, transferring the death sentence from her to the priests who were about to judge her unjustly (cf. Sus.,verses 44-62).

Through Susanna God has shown how close He is to those who are willing to endure trials for His sake, and whowill not abandon virtue out of cowardice because of the suffering involved, but cleave to the law of God by patientlyenduring what befalls them, rejoicing in the hope of salvation. And they have good cause to do this; for whenconfronted by two perils, one with temporary and the other with eternal consequences, is it not better to choose thefirst? For this reason St Isaac says that it is better to endure dangers out of love for God, and to cleave to Him in thehope of eternal life, than through

fear, of trials to fall away from God into the hands of the devil and to be condemned with him to punishment. If welove God, then like the saints we should rejoice in our own trials. But even if we are not like them, let us at leastchoose the better path simply out of constraint; for we are in fact constrained either to run bodily risks in this presentlife, thereby attaining the state of dispassion, and so coming to reign with Christ spiritually in this age and in the ageto be; or else, as I have said, to fall away through fear of trials and be committed to agelong punishment.

May God save us from punishment by giving us the strength patiently to endure whatever terrible things befall us.Endurance is like an unshakeable rock in the winds and waves of life. However the tempest batters him, the patientman remains steadfast and does not turn back; and when he finds relief and joy, he is not carried away by self-glory:he is always the same, whether things are hard or easy, and for this reason he is proof against the snares of theenemy. When storms beset him, he endures them with joy, awaiting their end; and when the heavens smile on him,he expects temptation-until his last breath, as St Antony has said. Such a person knows that nothing in life isunchangeable, and that all things pass. Thus he is not troubled or anxious about any of them, but leaves all things inthe hands of God, for He has us in His care (cf. 1 Pet. 5:7); and to Him belong all glory, honor and dominionthroughout the ages. Amen.

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VIHope

Life is hope free from all anxiety, wealth hidden from the senses but attested by the understanding and by the truenature of things. Farmers work laboriously, sowing and planting, sailors endure many dangers, and children learnreading and writing and other branches of knowledge. They all look forward with hope, laboring with joy.Outwardly they sacrifice immediate advantages, but in reality, even if they forfeit what they sacrifice, through theirpatient endurance they

gain what is of far greater value. But in such instances, it might be said, they do this because they know fromexperience that they stand to gain something, while in the realm of the spiritual no one has risen from the dead sothat we can know what rewards to expect. It is, however, only because we have no experience of spiritual gifts andspiritual knowledge that we think like this. Nor is it surprising that we should do so. For even farmers and sailors arefull of apprehension so long as they have not acquired experience. And children, ignorant of the value of writing andthe other subjects, seek to avoid learning them; but their parents, aware of what is to be gained, in their love compelthem to study; then, when the time is ripe, the children themselves acquire experience and not only begin to lovetheir lessons and those who force them to study, but even to accept with joy the ordeals of learning. Thus we, too,setting out in faith should strive patiently to advance, and not lose heart because of our tribulations; and then, whenthe time is ripe, we like them will come to know the value of what is happening to us and so will work tirelessly andwith joy and gladness. 'We walk by faith,' as St Paul says, 'not by sight'' (2 Cor. 5:1).

Yet just as it is impossible for someone engaged in business to make a profit on the basis of faith alone, so it isimpossible for anyone to attain spiritual knowledge and repose before he has labored in thought and action toacquire the virtues. And just as business men always fear loss and hope for gain, so should we, until our final breath;and as they exert themselves not only when they make a profit, but also after suffering loss and taking risks, soshould we as well, knowing that the idle man will not eat from the fruit of his own labors and so will become apauper, perhaps even falling heavily into debt. It is because of this that the prophet says, 'Thou hast made me todwell in hope' (Ps. 4:8. LXX); and the apostle writes, 'Through hope were they made perfect' (cf. Heb. 11:39-40).

Such in brief is what we can learn from nature and from Holy Scripture. But if someone wishes to know thesethings through experience, let him do all that he can to practice assiduously, as though he were at school, the sevenforms of bodily discipline, and let him pay attention to the moral virtues as well, that is, to the virtues that pertain tothe soul. Then, after attaining hope and persisting in it,

he will obtain precise knowledge of what has been said. Hewill realize that from the very outset of his repentance, when he began to practice

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the first of the seven forms of bodily disciphne - namely, stillness - the reward of hope and the blessings it conferswere granted to him even before he began to practice the other six, that is to say, fasting, vigils, and so on. As soonas he had begun to practice the first of them - stillness, the beginning of the soul's purification - at once the blessingsto which he aspired were bestowed on him. But being an inexperienced student he did not recognize the grace of hisMaster, just as a child does not recognize the bounty of his parents, though before he was bom it was already theirdesire to help him, for they prayed that he would be bom and would live. The child even fails to realize that he willbe their heir and will have all they already possess as well as what their labors may still accumulate. In his ignorancehe pays no attention whatsoever to such things, but thinks of obedience to his parents as a trial. Indeed, were he notin need of food and other natural necessities he would not be grateful towards them at all.

He who wishes to inherit the kingdom of heaven, yet does not patiently endure what befalls him, shows himselfeven more ungrateful than such a child. For he was created by God's grace, has received all things in this world,awaits what is to come, and has been called to reign eternally with Christ, who has honored him, in spite of hisnothingness, with such great gifts, visible and invisible, to the extent even of shedding His most precious blood forhim, not asking anything from him at all except that he should choose to receive His blessings. For this is Christ'sonly request, and whoever can understand that will be astonished. 'What does God require of you?' we are asked(cf. Mic. 6:8. LXX). How stupid we are! How is it that we look and fail to see His awesome mysteries? Forprecisely that which He seems to demand from us is in fact another, a greater gift. How do we not understand that hewho cultivates the virtues is the greatest of men, superior to all, even if he is a pauper and of humble birth? How canwe recognize the

prophets, apostles and martyrs in this present life, and yet be doubtful about the blessings held instore? Let us consider their lives and what they have done, and whence it is they say they have received grace andstrength. Do they not perform miracles even after their death? Have we not remarked how kings and rich peoplevenerate their holy icons? We have seen how virtuous men live even in this present life full of thankfulness andvirtue and spiritual joy, while the rich are troubled and experience greater trials and temptations than ascetics andthose who possess nothing. All this

gives us grounds for hoping that virtue is truly greater than everything else. But if it is not enough, then we shouldnote how unbelievers, although they may not know God, still praise virtue, despite the fact that the virtuous man

seems to have a faith other than their own. For even an enemy is capable of respecting virtue in his opponent.

If we beheve that virtue is good, then of necessity God, who created virtue and gave it to men, is also good; and ifHe is good, then of necessity He is likewise righteous, for righteousness is a virtue and thus is good. If God is bothgood and righteous, then He has certainly done all that He has done and is doing out of goodness, even if this doesnot seem to be so to the wicked. For nothing darkens a man's mind so much as evil, while God reveals Himself tosimplicity and humility, not to toil and weariness. But He reveals Himself, not in the way that some in theirinexperience think, but through the contemplation of created beings and through the revelation of the mysterieshidden in the divine Scriptures. Such is the reward, in this present life, of stillness and of the other virtues. As for theage to be, "the eye has not seen, and the ear has not heard, and man's heart has not grasped the things that God hasprepared for those who love Him' (1 Cor. 2:9), and who renounce their own will in patient endurance and in thehope of the blessings held in store. We pray that we too may attain these blessings through

the grace and love of ourLord Jesus Christ, to whom belong all glory, honor and dominion throughout the ages. Amen.

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Detachment has its origin in hope, for he who hopes to acquire elsewhere eternal wealth readily despises thatwhich is material and transient, even if it offers him every kind of comfort. For although his life may be harsh andfull of pain, who could persuade a man of intelligence to value material wealth above love for God, who gives bothforms of wealth to those who love Him? This could only happen to someone blind and unable to see at all becauseof his lack of faith or

because of his evil disposition and habits. Had he possessed faith, he would have been enlightened; and had hethrough his firm faith received but a small measure of the enlightenment that comes from spiritual knowledge, hewould have struggled to destroy those evil habits. And if he had resolved to do this, God's grace would have workedand struggled with him. But the Lord has said that few are saved (cf Luke 13:23-24); for the things we see appear tobe sweet, even when they are actually bitter. The dog that licks his wound with his tongue is not aware of the painbecause of the sweetness, and does not realize that he is drinking his own blood; and the glutton who eats whatharms him in both soul and body is not aware of the damage he does himself. All those who are the slaves of passionsuffer likewise because of their lack of awareness; and even if they resist for a while they are again overcome by

habit.

For this reason the Lord says, 'The kingdom of heaven is subjected to violence' (Matt. 11:12). Such violence isdue, not to our nature, but to our intimacy with the passions. Had it been due to our nature, no one would enter thekingdom. For those who have chosen the kingdom, however, the yoke of the Lord is easy to bear and His burden islight (cf. Matt. 11:30), while for those who have not made this choice, "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way'(Matt. 7:14) and 'the kingdom is subjected to violence' (Matt. 11:12). In the case of those who choose it, thekingdom is within and close to them, because they wish for it, and desire to attain here and now the state ofdispassion. For what helps or hinders our salvation is the will, and nothing else. If you want to do something good,do it; and if you cannot do it, then resolve to do it, and you will have achieved the resolution even if you do notfulfill the action itself. Thus a habit, whether good or bad, can gradually and spontaneously be overcome. If thiswere not the case, no criminals would ever be saved, whereas in fact not only have they been saved, but many havebecome conspicuous for their excellence. Think what a great gulf separates the criminal from the saint; yetresolution finally overcame habit. If by Christ's grace someone is religious, or a monk, what prevents him fromachieving sanctity, as criminals have achieved it? They were far from sanctity, he is near it; he has alreadycompleted the greater part of the journey, helped by grace, or by nature, or by the devotion and reverence he hasinherited from his parents. Is it not strange, then, that when brigands and grave-robbers become saints, monks are

condemned? But, alas, "the shame of my face has covered me' (Ps. 44:15).

Kings renounce their riches, as Joasaph did and others like him; but often a poor man is unable to continue in hisoriginal state, and so to enter without struggle into the kingdom of heaven simply by remaining detached from thingswhich he

has not acquired by inheritance from his parents. For although at baptism he renounced even what did notbelong to him - since another possesses the world and the things in it, he merely has the power to desire them - andalthough he renounced this world-ruler as well, yet even so he may afterwards try to acquire possessions. He maysay, "I am not able to live without possessions or to endure the things that befall me.' "What things?' it may beasked. The prison cells and chains which he endured previously, and might have had to endure, even if he had beena ruler? For even those who are in positions of authority and who possess wealth are subject to these things. What,then? The deprivation of life's necessities, the nakedness and the other things that he has to endure? But in order notto prolong this discussion by going into details and so heaping further disgrace on those who are already full ofshame, I will add only the following. If we crave but one of the visible things, the desire for which we haverenounced, then like Gehazi and Judas (cf. 2 Kgs. 5:25-27; Matt. 27:3-5) we will reap shame and disgrace in the ageto come. For Gehazi desired what he did not have and so both contracted leprosy and fell away from God; whileJudas desired to repossess what he had renounced and so was punished not only with hanging but also withperdition.

In what way is the monk exceptional if he does not persevere in virginity and a state of total dispossession? Allmen are under an obligation to keep the other commandments, because they pertain to our nature; that is to say, weare all required to love God and our neighbor, to endure patiently what befalls us, to make use of things according totheir true nature, and to refrain from committing evil. We should keep these commandments even if we do .not wantto. Indeed, unless we keep them, we will not find peace even in this world, since the laws punish those who offend

against them, and our rulers compel us to live virtuously. As St Paul says, the ruler 'does not[V3] 230

bear the sword to no purpose" (Rom. 13:4); and again: 'You wish to have no fear

of the authorities? Do what is rightand you will have their approval' (Rom. 13:3). Everyone does and wants to do these things because they accord withnature - indeed, we insist that they should be done. But the lot of the monk as a soldier of Christ is to do that whichis beyond nature; for this reason he should taste Christ's sufferings, so that he may also attain His glory.

Indeed, this too is a law of nature, verified by what happens in this world. Are not the soldiers of the king honoredbecause they suffer with him? And does not each of them receive praise in proportion to his suffering? And to theextent that he shows himself incapable of suffering in this way, is he not dishonored? Is it not obvious that the moreregal the garments a person wears, the closer he is to the king? And the less regal, the farther away? The same thingsapply in connection with our own King. The more we suffer with Christ and imitate His poverty, tasting Hissufferings and the ill-treatment to which He was subjected before He was crucified for our sake and buried, the moreintimate we become with Him and the more we share in His glory. It is as St Paul says: if we suffer with Him, wewill also be glorified with Him (cf Rom. 8:17).

Why, as we know, soldiers and thieves suffer simply trying to get food, travelers and sailors are absent from homefor long periods, and people endure great trials quite apart from any hope of the kingdom of heaven, often indeedfailing to achieve whatever it is they struggle for. But we are unwilling to endure even slight hardship for the sake ofthe kingdom of heaven and eternal blessings. Yet these might not prove so difficult to attain if our resolution abettedus and if we regarded the acquisition of the virtues not as a laborious and intolerable task, but rather as a joy and arelaxation, because of the hope, freedom from anxiety and unsolicited honor that come through virtue; for even itsenemy respects it and admires it. Finally, virtue brings us happiness and exultation. Indeed, detachment is full of joy,just as material existence and its shameful passions are full of sorrow. May we be redeemed from this materialexistence and may we attain eternal, immaterial life through the detachment that leads to the mortification of thebody, in Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom belong all glory, honor and worship throughout the ages. Amen.

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VII1Mortification of the Passions

He who has achieved detachment has his attention fixed always on God through contemplation. For detachment

from material things gives rise to the contemplation of spiritual realities-contemplation not of created beings in thispresent life, but of the awesome things that take place before and after death. For the detached person is taught aboutthese things by grace, so that through inward grief he may mortify the passions and, when the time is ripe, attainpeace and gentleness in his thoughts.

From faith comes fear, and from fear comes true piety, or self-control, the endurance of grief, and the other thingsof which the Lord's Beatitudes speak (cf. Matt. 5:3-12) - gentleness, hunger and thirst for righteousness, that is, forall the virtues, acts of mercy - and also detachment. From detachment comes the mortification of the body, realizedthrough compunctive sorrow and bitter tears of repentance and distress. By means of these the soul in its anguishrenounces the joys of this world and even the food we eat, for it begins to see that its faults are countless as the sandof the sea. This is the start of the soul's enlightenment and the sign of its health. The tears that may occur beforethis, and the apparently divine thoughts, compunction and the like, are all deceits and ruses of the demons,especially in the case of those living among men or subject to distraction, even though it be but slight.

For no one still attracted by any sensible object can overcome the passions. And if it is said that the saints of oldnot only lived among men but also possessed material things, the answer is that, though this is certainly true, theynever used any of these objects under the influence of the passions. This is clear from the fact that, as is recorded inthe genealogies of the Old Testament, they married wives and yet knew them only after many years, thus showingthat they were in a sense both married and unmarried. The same is true of Job and other righteous men. Indeed,David was both king and prophet, and Solomon likewise up to a certain point in his life. He himself describes howGod has sent subtle temptations to the sons of men, so that they might be distracted by vain things (cf. Eccles. 1:13)and thus prevented from turning towards what is even worse. All this is

clear from the very nature of things. For if, when there are thousands of distractions, some still find opportunity tocommit sins, how much more would this be the case if our lives were without distraction? In such circumstances, itis better for us to be superficially distracted, and so prevented from devoting ourselves to holy things and holythoughts, rather than for us to do many other things which are in fact worse.

But he who by God's grace has achieved a certain degree of spiritual knowledge and can understand the awesomethings that occur before and after death as a result of man's primal disobedience, should continue in all stillness anddetachment to occupy himself with such thoughts as well as with the actions that -induce them, and should not lethimself be distracted by vain things. 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity' (Eccles. 1:2); and on the basis of this text StJohn of Damaskos said. 'Truly all things are vanity, and life is but a shadow and a dream." For everyone worries invain, as the Scripture rightly says (cf. Ps. 39:6): for what can be more vain than a life whose end is putrefaction and

dust? Thus detachment is mortification, not of the intellect, but of the body's initial impulses towards pleasure andcomfort. For the desire for comfort, however slight, is a non-spiritual desire. And when the soul recognizes in itselfsome altogether spiritual activity or knowledge, it feels still greater distress at the presence of this non-spiritualdesire; for if the soul is non-spiritual, the Spirit of God will not abide in it (cf. Gen. 6:3). When this happens, thesoul will not be interested in any good work, but will struggle to fulfill the desires of the body and of its ownindwelling passions, piling darkness upon darkness, and gladly accepting to live always in utter ignorance.

When a man has been sufficiently illumined, however, to perceive his own faults, he never ceases mourning forhimself and for all men, seeing God's great forbearance and what sins we in our wretchedness have committed andstill

persist in committing. As a result of this he becomes full of gratitude, not daring to condemn anyone, shamed bythe profusion of God's blessings and the multitude of our sins. Thereupon he joyfully renounces everything in hisown will that is counter to God, and he watches over his own senses, so as to prevent them from doing anythingbeyond what is unavoidably needed.

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In this way he emulates the psalmist, who wrote: 'Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor are my eyes presumptuous'(Ps. 131:1). But after having reached such heights he must be careful lest through negligence or self-inflation hesuffers what David suffered, without perhaps being able to repent as David did. For to sin, even in the case of thosewho are most righteous, is easy, while repentance is not easy for everyone because death is near; and even beforedeath comes there is despair. It is good, then, not to fall; or, if we fall, to rise again. And should we fall, we shouldnot despair and so estrange ourselves from the Lord's love. For if He so chooses. He can deal mercifully with ourweakness. Only we should not cut ourselves off from Him or feel oppressed when constrained by Hiscommandments, nor should we lose heart when we fall short of our goal. Rather, let us learn that a thousand years inthe sight of the Lord are but a single day, and a single day is as a thousand years (cf. Ps. 90:4). Let us be neitherhasty nor tardy, and let us be always ready to make a new start. If you fall, rise up. If you fall again, rise up again.Only do not abandon your Physician, lest you be condemned as worse than a suicide because of your despair. Waiton Him, and He will be merciful, either reforming you, or sending you trials, or through some other provision ofwhich you are ignorant.

For the devil is in the habit of promoting in the soul whatever he sees is in accordance with the soul's owndisposition, whether this be joy or self-conceit, distress or despair, excessive toil or utter indolence, or thoughts andactions that are untimely and profitless, or blindness and unreflecting hatred of all that exists. Quite simply, heinflames in the soul whatever material he finds there already, so

as to do it as much harm as he can, even though initself the thing may be good and acceptable to God, provided that it is used with due restraint by one who is able to

judge things and to discern the intention of God hidden in the six passions that surround him - those, that is, abovehim and below, to his right and to his left, within him and without. Whether it relates to the practice of the virtues orto spiritual knowledge, there is some good purpose lying within the six passions that oppose him.

Thus, as St Antony says," we should always seek counsel about everything; and we should consult not justanyone, but those who

have the grace of discrimination; for if the person we consult lacks experience, we may both fall into the ditch, as inthe example given in the Gospel (cf Matt. 15:12-14). For without discrimination nothing good is ever done, eventhough to the ignorant it appears to be altogether good; for what is done without discrimination will be eitheruntimely, or profitless, or disproportionate, or beyond the strength or knowledge of the person doing it, or faulty insome other way. He who has the gift of discrimination has received it on account of his humility. Through it heknows all things by grace and, when the time is ripe, he attains spiritual insight.

From inward grief, then, and patient endurance come hope and detachment; and through hope and detachment wedie to the world. We may also die to the world by enduring patiently and by not despairing when we see everywheredismay and death, knowing that this is both a trial and an illumination; or by not being over-confident about havingreached our goal. Shedding many tears of distress, we begin to see clearly before us the holy sufferings of the Lord,and we are greatly solaced by them. And we truly regard ourselves as inferior to all other men,

perceiving how manyblessings are bestowed on us through the grace of God, to whom be glory and dominion through all the ages. Amen.

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The Remembrance of Christ's Sufferings

So that we will not think that we are doing something great through our ascetic efforts and our many sighs andtears, we are given knowledge of the sufferings of Christ and His saints. Meditating on these we are astonished, and

in our amazement we exhaust ourselves through our ascetic labors. For by contemplating the numberless trials thatthe saints joyfully accepted and the many sufferings that the Lord endured on our behalf, we become aware of ourown feebleness. At the same time we are illumined by the knowledge of what the Lord did and said. And byunderstanding what is stated in the Gospel, we begin sometimes to mourn bitterly in sorrow, sometimes to rejoicespiritually in thanksgiving. Not because we think that we have

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done anything good, for that would be self-conceit; but because, in spite of being such sinners, we have been grantedthe contemplation of these things.

In this way we become all the more humble in action and thought, practicing the

seven forms of bodily disciplineof which we have spoken, as well as the moral virtues, that is to say, the virtues of the soul; and we guard the fivesenses and keep the Lord's commandments. We do not regard these as good works deserving reward; rather we viewthem as a debt to be paid. Nor do we hope in any way to be released from the debt, for we recognize how enormousare the gifts of knowledge that we have received. We become, as it were, captive to the meaning of what we readand the message of what we chant; and in our delight we often unconsciously forget our sins, and in our joy webegin to shed tears that are sweet as honey. But then, fearful of being deluded in case this is all premature, werestrain ourselves; and recalling our former way of life, we again weep bitterly. In this manner we oscillate betweenthese two kinds of tears, the sweet and the bitter.

So we go forward, provided we are attentive and always consult someone of experience, and provided we comebefore God with the pure prayer that is appropriate for one practicing the virtues, while at the same time wewithdraw our intellect from all that it has known or heard, and concentrate it on the remembrance of God, askingonly that God's will may be done in all our thoughts and undertakings. But if we fail to do this, then we are liable tobe deluded, thinking that we will see an apparition of one of the holy angels, or of Christ. We fail to realize that hewho seeks to see Christ should look not outside himself, but within himself, emulating Christ's life in this world,and becoming sinless in body and soul, as Christ was. His intellect should apprehend everything through Christ.

To have in mind any form, color or thought during the time of prayer is not good-in fact it may be extremelydangerous. Evagrios has explained what is meant by the intellect being in the realm or dwelling-place of God. Hetook the expression from the Psalter: 'In peace is His dwelling-place' (Ps. 76:2. LXX). To be 'in peace" means tohave no thoughts, whether bad or good, because, as Evagrios says, if the intellect perceives something, it is not inGod alone, but also in

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itself. This is true; for since God is undetermined and indeterminable, without form or color, the intellect that is withGod alone should itself be without form or color, free from all figuration and undistracted. Otherwise it will besubject to demonic illusion. That is why we must be careful and, unless we have taken advice from someone ofexperience, we should not entertain any thought, whether good or bad, for we do not know which it is. For thedemons take whatever shape they want and appear in this way to us, just as the human intellect is shaped by what itwants and is colored by the forms of the things that it perceives. The demons do this in order to deceive us, andunder their influence our intellect wanders senselessly in its efforts to reach perfection.

Thus one ought to constrain the intellect as much as possible within the bounds of some meditation acceptable toGod. For as there are seven forms of bodily discipline, so there are eight types of contemplation, or types of spiritualknowledge, that pertain to the intellect. Three of these, which have already been mentioned, are connected with theholy sufferings of the Lord and we should always of our own accord meditate on them, so as to grieve over our ownsoul and over those of our fellow men. But in addition to these, we should also think about the terrible things thathappened at the very beginning because of man's transgression; about how our nature succumbed to so manypassions; about our own faults and the trials that occur for the sake of our correction and recovery. Finally we shouldthink both of death and of the fearful punishments that await sinners after death. In this way the soul may bestrengthened and devote itself to grief. At the same time it will be solaced and humbled, neither despairing becauseof these terrible thoughts nor imagining that it has attained the level of spiritual work; and it will continue in fear andhope, a state equivalent to gentleness of thought and one that is always the same. It is this that leads the intellect tospiritual knowledge and discrimination. The psalmist confirms this when he writes: 'He will lead the gentle tojudgment' (Ps. 25:9), or rather, to discrimination, or what the prophet describes as spiritual knowledge and holiness(cf Isa. 11:2. LXX).

Yet as true piety, although a single term, takes many outward forms, so spiritual

knowledge, also a single term,includes many forms of

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knowledge and contemplation. For even the first step in the practice of bodily discipline is a form of knowledge; infact, without knowledge no one does anything good. Until we attain our goal - by which I mean until we are adoptedas sons and our intellect ascends into the heavens in Christ-each state is a form of knowledge and contemplation.The knowledge that we have before we begin to practice a spiritual discipline helps to make this practice effective,serving thus as a kind of tool; while the knowledge that follows on faith protects our faith with fear as with a wall.

The knowledge and the practice of the soul's virtues have as their goal the preparation and planting of the trees ofparadise. These trees are the knowledge of a man's intellect and his spiritual labor; in other words, the attentivenessof his intellect and the moral state of his soul. By practicing the commandments he "cultivates and keeps' the trees(cf. Gen. 2:15) with understanding and insight. At the same time he is helped by divine providence, that acts likesun, rain, wind and growth, without which all the effort of the gardener is in vain, even if everything has been donein due order. For nothing good can come about without help from above; yet help from above and grace are onlygranted to those who have resolved to act, as St John Chrysostom says.

In this life, all things go in pairs: practice and spiritual knowledge, free will and grace, fear and hope, struggle andreward. The second does not come until the first has been actualized; and if it seems as if it does, this is illusion, justas someone who lacks horticultural knowledge, on seeing the flower and thinking that it is the fruit, rushes forwardto pick it, not realizing that by picking the flower he destroys the fruit, so it is here: for, as St Maximos puts it, "Tothink that

one knows prevents one from advancing in knowledge.' Hence we ought to cleave to God and to do allthings with discrimination.

Discrimination comes from seeking advice with humility and from criticizing oneself and what one thinks anddoes. There is nothing astonishing in the fact that the devil assumes the form of "an angel of light' (2 Cor. 11:14), forthe thoughts that he sows in us also appear to be righteous when we lack experience. Humility is the gateway to

dispassion, said St John Klimakos; and, according to St Basil the Great, the fuel of humility is gentleness. It is thisthat gives man constancy, so that he is always the same whether circumstances and thoughts are pleasant orunpleasant. He is indifferent to both honor and dishonor, joyfully accepting things sweet and painful, and remainingunperturbed.

In this he is unlike the virgin about whom St Antony the Great speaks. One day, while St Antony was sitting with

a certain Abba, a virgin came up and said to the Elder: 'Abba, I fast six days of the week and I repeat by heartportions of the Old and New Testaments daily/ To which the Elder replied: 'Does poverty mean the same to you asabundance?' 'No', she answered. 'Or dishonor the same as praise?' 'No, Abba/ Are your enemies the same for youas your friends?' 'No', she replied. At that the wise Elder said to her: "Go, get to work, you have accomplishednothing.' And he was justified in speaking like this. For if she fasted so strictly as to eat only once a week, and thenvery little, should she not have regarded poverty in the same way as abundance? And if she repeated passages fromthe Old and New Testaments daily, should she not also have learnt humility? And since she had

surrenderedeverything worldly, should she not have considered all people to be her friends? And if she did still have enemies,could she not learn to treat them as friends after so much ascetic effort? The Elder was quite right when he said,'You have accomplished nothing.'

Indeed, I would add that such a person deserves severe condemnation. It is as St John Chrysostom said withregard to the five foolish virgins: they had the strength to practice the more difficult form of asceticism - thevirginity which is beyond nature - but not to perform what is less difficult - acts of mercy - though pagans and non-believers perform such acts as something natural. So with this virgin: because she did not know what was reallyneeded, she labored in vain. As the Lord said: 'AH this you should have done, without neglecting the rest' (Matt.23:23). Ascetic practice is a good thing, but only when done with the right goal in mind. We ought to think of it notas the real task, but as a preparation for the real task;

not as the fruit, but as the earth that can, with time, labor and the help of God, bear trees from which the fruit willcome-the fruit that is purity of intellect and union with God. To Him be glory throughout the ages. Amen.

Humility

The truly humble man never ceases to reproach himself, even when the whole world attacks and insults him. Heacts in this way, not simply in order to attain salvation as it were passively by enduring with patience whateverbefalls him, but in order to press forward actively and deliberately to embrace the sufferings of Christ. From thesesufferings he learns the greatest of all the virtues, humility: the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit, the gateway to thekingdom of heaven, that is to say, to dispassion. He who passes through this gateway comes to God; but withouthumility his road is full of pain and his effort useless. Humility bestows complete repose upon whoever possesses itin his heart, because he has Christ dwelling within him. Through it grace remains with him and God's gifts arepreserved. It is the offspring of many different virtues: of obedience, patient endurance, shedding of possessions,poverty, fear of God, spiritual knowledge and others as well. But above all it is the offspring of discrimination, thevirtue that illumines the farthest reaches of the intellect. Yet let no one think that it is a simple, casual matter tobecome humble. It is something beyond our natural powers; and it is almost true to say that the more a person isgifted, the harder it is for him to attain humility. It presupposes great judgment and endurance in the face of the trialsand evil spirits that oppose us. For humility slips through all their snares.

Humility is also the offspring of spiritual knowledge, and such knowledge is bom of trials and temptations. To theman who knows himself is given the knowledge of all things; and to the man who submits to God, all things will besubject when humility reigns in his members. For it is precisely through undergoing many trials and temptations,and through patiently enduring them, that a man

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acquires experience; and as a result he comes to know both his own weakness and the power of God. In becomingaware of his own weakness and ignorance, he recognizes that he has now learned what once he did not know; andthis allows him to see that just as he used not to know these things, and was unaware that he did not know, so thereare many other things which he may later be able to learn. St Basil the Great observes in this connection that unlessone tastes something one is unaware of what one is missing. But he who has tasted spiritual knowledge knows atleast to some extent that he is ignorant, and so his knowledge becomes for him a source of humility. Again, he whoknows that he is a mutable creature will never maintain a high opinion of himself; he will recognize that anything hemay have belongs to his Creator. You do not praise a pot on the grounds that it has made itself useful; you praise itsmaker. And when it is broken, you blame whoever broke it, not its maker.

Yet if the vessel of which we are speaking is endowed with intelligence, then necessarily it will possess free will.Whatever is good in it comes from its Creator, and He is also the cause of its being made; but its fall or deviationwill depend upon how it exercises its own free will. If you do not deviate, God in His grace will grant you the seal ofHis approval; but if you give ear to the serpent's evil counsel, disapprobation will be your lot. Approval andgratitude, however, are due not to the man who receives the gifts but to Him who bestows them. Yet by grace he

who receives a gift may deserve approval because by his own choice he accepted what he did not have or, rather,because he is grateful to his Benefactor. And if he is not grateful, not only does he forfeit all approval, but he is self-condemned for his ingratitude as well. Yet no one, I trust, is so shameless as to claim that the gift was not freelybestowed on him and to pretend in his iniquity that he deserves praise, calmly puffing himself up and condemningthose who are apparently not like him, on the grounds that he himself has conferred on himself the wealth he thinkshe possesses, and has not received it by God's grace. Should such a person thank the Giver, he does so in the sameway as the Pharisee in the Gospel, and says to himself, "I thank Thee, 0 God, that I am not like other men" (Luke18:11). The Evangelist - or, rather, God, who knows men's hearts - was right to say that he spoke "to himself, for thePharisee was not speaking to God. Even though orally he did seem to be speaking to God, yet God who knew his

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self-applauding soul says that he stood and prayed not to God but to himself.

The fact that the Scriptures often make use of identical or very similar phrases is due, says St John Chrysostom,not to repetitiveness or prolixity, but to the desire to imprint what is said on the heart of the reader. In the ardor ofhis writing the psalmist did not want to stop, as do those who have not tasted the sweetness of his words and who intheir listlessness trample them underfoot so as to be freed from the weight of them. Will such a person ever reap anyprofit from Holy Scripture? Does he not simply earn condemnation and a darkening of his intellect by opening thedoor to the demons who are attacking him?

As the Lord has said: "If they do these things when the wood is green, what will happen when it is diy?'(Luke23:31); and again: "If the righteous man is only just saved, where will the ungodly and the sinner appear?' (1 Pet.4:18). The demons attack even those whose intellect, immaterial and formless, is concentrated entirely on theremembrance of God; and, unless God assisted them on account of their humility, their prayer would not mount toheaven but would fall back empty. What then will be our lot, abject as we are? We do not even open our lips andspeak into the air, so that at the last God may have mercy on us, descending to the level of our ignorance andweakness because we have shown gratitude to Him.

As for whether or not the demons attack even the perfect in this world, let us hear what St Makarios says: 'No onebecomes perfect in this present age; for if they did, then what is given here would not be simply a pledge of theblessings held in store but their full realization.' He adduces in testimony one of the brethren who was praying withseveral others and who was suddenly snatched up mentally to heaven and saw the heavenly Jerusalem and thetabernacles of the saints. When he returned to his habitual state, however, he fell from virtue and ended up by beingcompletely destroyed; for he thought he had achieved

something and did not realize that, being unworthy and onlydust by nature, he was that much the more in debt for having been privileged to ascend to such a height. St Makariosalso says that he had known many men, and from his experience had come to

recognize without any doubt that no one in this world is perfect: even if he becomes altogether immaterial and isalmost one with God, yet sin pursues him and will not disappear completely before his death.

Evagrios the Solitary has recounted how a certain monk was praying when, for his benefit and for that of manyothers, God allowed the demons to take him by his hands and feet and throw him in the air; and so that his bodywould not be hurt when he fell to the earth, they caught him in a rush-mat. This they did for a long time, but wereunable to distract his intellect from heaven.' How would such a man even perceive what he was eating? Whenwould he have need of psalmody or reading? But we have need of them because of the weakness of our intellect,though even in this way we fail to concentrate. Alas, such a holy man suffered attacks from the demons, yet we donot worry at all about their assaults. The saints are protected by their humility from the snares of the devil, while wein our ignorance are puffed up. It is indeed a sign of great ignorance for someone to be self-elated-about what is nothis. For 'what do you have which you did not receive', either freely from God or through the prayers of others?"Now if you received it, why do you boast as if you had not received it' (1 Cor. 4:7), but had achieved it yourself?So Abba Cassian puts it.

Humility, then, is bom from spiritual knowledge, and itself gives birth to discrimination; while fromdiscrimination comes the spiritual insight which the prophet calls "counsel" (Isa. 11:2). By means of such insight wesee things

according to their true nature, and the intellect dies to the world because it now contemplates the creationsof God. To Him be glory throughout the ages. Amen.

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XI

Discrimination

It is excellent to seek advice about everything, but only from those with experience. It is dangerous to askquestions of the inexperienced, because they do not possess discrimination. Discrimination

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knows when the time is ripe, what means to employ, the inner state of the questioner, what level he has reached, hisstrength, his degree of spiritual knowledge and his intention, as well as God's purpose and the meaning of eachverse of Holy Scripture, and much else besides. Hence he who lacks discrimination may exert himself enormously,but he cannot achieve anything; while the person who possesses it is a guide to the blind and a light to those indarkness (cf Rom. 2:19). We should refer everything to such a person and accept whatever he says, even if becauseof our inexperience we do not see its import as well as we would like. Indeed, he who has discrimination is to berecognized in particular from the fact that he is able to communicate the sense of what he says even to those who donot want to know it. For the Spirit searches things out; and God's presence has the power to persuade even anunwilling intellect to believe. This is what happened in the case of Jonah (cf Jonah 1:3),

Zachanas (cf. Luke 1:18)and - the monk David, once a brigand, whom the angel prevented from saying anything except the psalms that herecited according to his rule of prayer.

If in this present generation no one possesses discrimination, it is because no one has the humility that engendersit. We should therefore pray fervently about everything we do, as St James counsels (cf. Jas. 5:16). For even if welack holy hands, that is, if we lack purity of soul and body, we should at least strive to be without rancor and evilthoughts. For St Paul tells us to Tift up holy hands without anger and without quarrelling' (1 Tim. 2:8). If we thinkthat something is in accordance with God's will, we should do it dispassionately; and even if it is not such a verygood thing, what we do will be counted to our credit by God's grace, because of our perplexity and the fact that wedo it with God in mind. Even if we do God's will when passion is still present, the consequences will be as stated.This is inevitably so, simply because of God's goodness. But where our own will is involved, and not God's, thereself-inflation is present as well, and God does not approve; nor does He reveal His will to us then, lest we shouldknow what it is and still not do it, and thereby incur greater condemnation. For whether God gives us something orwithholds it from us. He acts for our good, even if we, like children, are unaware of this. He does not send down HisHoly Spirit to someone who has not purified himself from the passions through the practice of the virtues thatpertain both to body and to

soul, lest this person should out of habit succumb to his passions and so become guilty of abusing the presence of

the Holy Spirit within him.

A person must first spend a long time in ascetic practice. He must begin by purifying his body from the actualcommitting of sin, whether great or small, and then purge his soul of every form of desire or anger. His moralimpulses need to be disciplined by good habit, so that he does not do anything whatsoever through his five sensesthat is contrary to the purpose of his intellect, nor does his inner self consent to any such thing. It is then, whenfinally he becomes subject to himself, that God makes all things subject to him through dispassion and by the graceof the Holy Spirit. For a man must first submit to the law of God, and then he will rule as an intelligent being overall around him. His intellect will reign as it was originally created to reign, with judgment and self-restraint, withcourage and justice. Now he will calm his wrath with the gentleness of his desire, now quieten his desire with theausterity of his wrath; and he will know that he is a king. All the limbs of his body, no longer abducted by ignoranceand forgetfulness, will act in accordance with God's commandment. Then through his devotion to God he willachieve spiritual insight and will begin to anticipate the snares prepared by the devil and his secret and stealthyattacks.

He will not, however, foresee the future as did the prophets. For this ability is a supranatural gift granted for thegood of the community. Insight, however, is intrinsic to man's nature; and, once the intellect is purified, it emergesfrom the tyranny of the passions under which it has been concealed, as it were, in the dark. Then, through humility,comes grace and opens the soul's eye, blinded by the devil, and immediately man begins to see things according totheir true nature. He is no longer seduced by the outward appearance of things as he was before. He looksdispassionately on gold, silver and precious stones and is not led astray, nor does he assess them falsely because ofhis passions: he knows that these and other such material things come from the earth, as the holy fathers point out.He looks at a man, and knows that he too is from the earth and is going to return to it (cf Gen. 3:19). And he doesnot simply think about this in an abstract way, for we all know from experience that this is the case; yet because weare tyrannized by the passions we still have a craving for material things.

XI

Discrimination

Should someone in his presumption think that even without the prerequisite struggles and virtues he is able to seethings according to their true nature, there is nothing strange in this. For presumption can make even the blind thinkthat they can see and foolish men boast when they have nothing to boast about. Yet if it were easy to see thingsaccording to their true nature merely by thinking about them in an abstract way, then inward grief and thepurification that comes from it would be superfluous; and so would the many forms of ascetic labor, as well ashumility, supranatural grace, and dispassion. But this is not the case at all. For often this capacity to see thingsaccording to their true nature comes more readily to simple people, to those whose intellects are free from the hustleand wiliness of this world, once they have submitted themselves to an experienced spiritual father. It may also begranted through the special dispensation of God's grace, as it was to people in ancient times, before they knew eithertheir left hand or right hand (cf Jonah 4:11). But the fact that we have served the passions from our youth up, andhave practiced virtually every form of malice and fraud with complete willingness and zeal, means that it is

impossible for us to be freed from such evils and to see things as they truly are without effort, time, and God's help.It is indeed impossible, unless we devote ourselves to the acquisition of the virtues as once we devoted ourselves tothe passions, and unless we cultivate these virtues diligently in thought and action.

If in spite of this our efforts are often of no avail, this is either because we do not endure our trials to the end, orbecause we do not know the road or the goal, or because of slothfulness or lack of faith, or for one of the numberlessother reasons. But if this is the case, and we strike very wide of the mark, how can we dare claim that we haveattained the ancient beauty, unless we have been deluded by self-satisfaction and unperceived self-destruction? Forjust as self-criticism is a form of invisible progress - since it carries us along the right path even though we areunaware of it-so both presumption and self-satisfaction are forms of unseen destruction, since we have turned backwithout realizing it. This is inevitably so; for the passions expelled by grace return to an arrogant soul, as the Lordtold us when He spoke of the unclean spirit that, after being expelled from a man, later returned, bringing with itseven other spirits more wicked than itself (cf. Matt. 12:43-4;). Why does this happen? Because the place

from which the unclean spirit departed is not filled with spiritual activity, or with humility; and therefore the uncleanspirit comes out of bondage and again takes up its dwelling in this place, along with many other evils.

Let him who understands take note. For the Logos wishes to transmit things to us in a way that is neither too clearnor too obscure, but is in our best interests. St John Chrysostom says that it is a great blessing from God that someparts of the Scriptures are clear while others are not. By means of the first we acquire faith and ardor and do not fallinto disbelief and laziness because of our utter inability to grasp what is said. By means of the second we are rousedto enquiry and effort, thus both strengthening our understanding and learning humility from the fact that everythingis not intelligible to us. Hence, if we take stock of the gifts conferred on us, we will reap humility and longing forGod from both what we understand and what we do not. Thus the gauge of the fifth stage of contemplation, aboutwhich we are now speaking, is this: that we are enabled to look with discrimination at sensible creation and at ourown thoughts, not blinded by any delusion, or doing anything contrary to God's purpose because of our subjectionto the passions, or submitting to any of our evil thoughts. Even if threatened with death, we would not deviate fromGod's purpose in thought or action.

What has just been said applies to the final stages of spiritual knowledge. Where the initial stage is concerned, wewill unavoidably fall short of our goal because we are learners. Indeed, defeated by our bad habits, we may achievenothing as a result of our labor. Sometimes, however. God in His providence allows us to go slightly astray, and

then at once to return with great humility; at other times He permits us in our

presumption to think too much ofourselves. When this happens we should realize that God's grace is disciplining us, teaching us to be humble and torecognize whence we receive our strength and knowledge, 'so that we should rely not on ourselves but on God whoraises the dead' (2 Cor. 1:9), something which happens even in this world. For if we endure with patience, and donot grow presumptuous or lapse from virtue, we will be raised from the deathlike state of the body and of materialthings to the spiritual knowledge of created realities. Indeed, according to St Paul (cf Rom. 6:4-6), we are crucifiedwith Christ bodily through the practice of bodily discipline, and in soul through the practice of the virtues that

pertain to the soul. We are then buried through the mortification of the senses and of natural knowledge. Finally,through attaining the state of dispassion we are resurrected spiritually in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be gloryand honor through all the ages. Amen.

Until our intellect has died to the passions, it should not attempt to embark on the contemplation of sensiblerealities. For if it is still subject to distraction and is

unable to devote itself to meditation on the divine Scriptures instillness and spiritual knowledge, then by turning prematurely to such contemplation we tend to sink more deeplyinto forgetfulness and gradually to approach a state of ignorance, even though our intellect may have alreadyattained some degree of spiritual knowledge. This happens especially if, unknown to ourselves, our knowledge hasnot come to us through God's grace, but we are still learning about such mysteries through reading and from peoplewho have experienced them.

Just as the earth-and especially good earth-becomes cloddish if the farmer does not work it, so our intellectbecomes coarse and obtuse if we do not devote ourselves to prayer and reading, making this our chief task. And just

as the earth, even when moistened by rain and warmed by the sun, yields nothing unless the farmer sows andcultivates it, so our intellect cannot keep possession of spiritual knowledge, even if this knowledge has beenbestowed on it by grace, unless we practice the moral virtues, those, that is to say, of the soul. For as soon as theintellect grows negligent and turns even slightly towards the passions, it at once goes astray; while if presumptionseduces it, it is abandoned by grace.

Because of this, even though the fathers often reduced their practice of bodily discipline because of age or lack ofphysical strength, they never relaxed their practice of the moral virtues at all. For in the place of bodily asceticismthey had bodily weakness, which

is able to constrain the flesh. But we cannot keep the soul sinless so that the intellect may be illumined unless wepractice the virtues of the soul. The fanner frequently changes his implements, and may even reduce their number,but he

never leaves the ground unworked, unsown or unplanted, nor does he ever leave the fruit unprotected if hewishes to gather it.

If, however, a thief or robber tries to enter, not by the proper door, but by "climbing up some other way", as theLord puts it (John 10:1), then the sheep- that is, according to St Maximos, divine thoughts - pay no attention to him.For the thief enters only so that he can deceive by hearsay, and kill the Scriptures by turning them into allegory,since he is unable to interpret them spiritually. Thus through his presumption and his pseudo-knowledge he destroysboth himself and the divine thoughts contained in the Scriptures. But the shepherd, as a good soldier of Christ, feelscompassion for these thoughts; and by keeping the divine commandments he enters in through the narrow gate (cfMatt. 7:13), the gate of humility and dispassion. Before receiving divine grace he devotes himself to studying and tolearning about everything by listening to others; and whenever the wolf approaches in the guise of a sheep (cf. Matt.7:15), he chases him off by means of self-criticism, saying, "I do not know who you are: God knows." And should athought approach shamelessly and ask to be received, saying to him, 'If you do not watch over thoughts anddiscriminate between things, you are ignorant and lacking in faith", then he replies, "If you call me a fool, I acceptthe title; for like St John Chrysostom I know that whoever is foolish in this world becomes wise, as St Paul puts it'(cf 1 Cor 3:18).

The Lord Himself said that the children of this world are more astute in dealing with their own kind than are thechildren of the kingdom of heaven (cf. Luke 16:8). And He was quite right: for the children of this world long tomake good and to grow rich, to be clever and to win praise, to gain power and so on; and even though they are likely

to fail in their aspirations and their effort will prove vain, they still exert more than human strength to attain thesethings. But the children of the kingdom aspire to things that are completely

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Contemplation of the Sensible World

different, and because of this they often receive in this world a foretaste of the blessings held in store. Like thechildren of this world they exert themselves, but they do this so that by grace their intellect may be liberated andmay thereby become unforgettingly mindful of God. In this way it comes to know the divine thoughts to which theHoly Scriptures and those with experience in spiritual knowledge bear witness; or else in its perplexity it realizesthat in spite of its great knowledge it is still ignorant of them. Then it understands that its former thoughts were trialsintended to test its free will.

Thus he who is humble will turn away from his own thoughts and purposes, having no faith in them; indeed, hewill be afraid, and seek advice with many tears, taking refuge in humility and self-criticism, and regarding spiritualknowledge and gifts of grace as great liabilities. But the arrogant man will promptly insist upon his own thoughts,ignoring the warning of St John Klimakos that we should not search prematurely for things that have their appointedtime. He also ignores St Isaac's counsel that we should not enter in recklessly, but should give thanks in silence. Nordoes he listen to St John Chrysostom when he says, T do not know", having learned to say this from St Paul (cf 2Cor. 12:2-3); or to St John of Damaskos when he says of Adam that he embarked prematurely on the contemplationof sensible realities. For the stomachs, of infants are too tender for solid food and need milk, as St Paul says (cf. 1Cor. 3:2; Heb. 5:12-14). That is why we should not attempt to embark on contemplation when it is not yet time forcontemplation. Let us first acquire in ourselves the mothers of the virtues, and then spiritual knowledge will comespontaneously through the grace of Christ: to whom be glory through all the ages. Amen.

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XIIIKnowledge of the Angelic Orders

Knowledge becomes spiritual after we are firmly established in the contemplation of sensible realities. Yet thegnostic cannot by his own power see an angel; for how can man, who cannot see even his own soul, see something

that is non-material and known only to its Creator? For the common good, however, angels by God's providenceoften appeared to our fathers in visible form. But such a thing does not happen to us, because it is our presumptionthat makes us want it to happen, and we do not think of the common good or suffer in order to fulfill God's will.Thus should we want to see a thing of this kind we are really asking to see a demon. Indeed, St Paul speaks of Satanhimself being 'transformed into an angel of light' (2 Cor. 11:14). Rather, it is when we do not think about suchthings at all, and perhaps do not even believe that they occur, that they do in fact happen, if received for the commongood. We can gauge our attitude by asking ourselves whether we have any desire to experience such a thing, even ina dream, or would attach great importance to it if it were to happen, or would behave as if we did not know anythingabout the state in which we found ourselves. For the true angel has power from God to reassure even the intellectthat repudiates it and to make it receptive. The demons cannot do this; but when they see an intellect disposed toreceive them, only then with God's consent they appear to it. If the intellect is not thus disposed, however, thedemons depart, chased away by the guardian angel given us at holy baptism, since the intellect has not surrenderedits free will to the enemy.

So much for these matters. Now I will say something about the contemplation of the angelic orders. According toSt Dionysios the Areopagite and as we find confirmed in Holy Scripture (cf Isa. 6:2; Ezek. 1:5; Rom. 8:38; Eph.1:21; Col. 1:16; 1 Thess. 4:16), there are nine such orders. These nine orders have been named according to theirnatures and activities. They are called 'bodiless" because they are non-material, 'spiritual' because they areintellects, and "hosts' because they are the ministering spirits of the King of all

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(cf Luke 2:13; Heb. 1:14). They also have other names and titles, both specific and general; thus they are called'powers' (cf. Eph. 1:21; 1 Pet. 3:22) and "angels', that is to say, "messengers' (cf. Matt. 1:20). "Powers' is the nameof a single order but it applies also to all nine orders with regard to their activities, for all have been empowered tofulfill God's will. Again, one particular order - that which is closest to us and ninth from God's inaccessible throne -is called the order of 'angels'; yet with regard to their activities all are called 'angels', or 'messengers', because allannounce the divine ordinances to men.

The book of Job speaks several times of 'another messenger" (cf. Job 1:14-19); but. this was not a holy angel,since, as St John Chrysostom points out, in each case he was the only one of Job's servants to escape, and he thencame to give Job the news. The Holy Scriptures even call the Lord an 'angel" in several places, as when it is saidthat Abraham" entertained angels' (Heb. 13:2; cf. Gen. 18:1-2). Indeed, the Lord Himself was 'fleshless', as St Johnof Damaskos says in a hymn to the Mother of God: 'In the tent Abraham saw the mystery that is in you, 0 Mother of

God; for he received your Son fleshless. The Lord was also together with the three holy children in the fiery furnace(cf. Dan. 3:25); and because of His activity He is also called "angel" or "messenger' by the prophet Isaiah, who usesthe expression 'the angel of great counsel' (Isa. 9:6. LXX). As the Lord Himself said, 'I will announce to you thosethings that I have heard from My Father' (cf. John 8:26). To Him be glory throughout the ages. Amen.

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XIVDispassion

Dispassion is a strange and paradoxical thing: once someone has consolidated his victory over the passions, it isable to make him an imitator of God, so far as this is possible for man. For though the person who has attained thestate of dispassion continues to suffer

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attacks from demons and vicious men, he experiences this as if it were happening to someone else, as was the casewith the holy apostles and martyrs. When he is praised he is not filled with self-elation, nor when he is insulted is heafflicted. For he considers that what is pleasant comes to him by the grace of God and as an act of divine concessionof which he is unworthy, while what is unpleasant comes as a trial: the former is given us by grace to encourage usin this world, while the latter is given us to increase our humility and our hope in the world to be. Such a person isimpassible, and yet because of his power of discrimination is acutely aware of what gives pain.

Dispassion is not a single virtue, but is a name for all the virtues. A man is not merely one limb, for it is the manylimbs of the body that constitute a man; and not merely the limbs, but the limbs together with the soul. Similarly,dispassion is the union of many virtues, while the place of the soul is taken by the Holy Spirit. For all activitiesdescribed as "spiritual' are soul-less without the Holy Spirit, and it is by virtue of the presence of the Holy Spirit thata 'spiritual father' is given this title. Yet if the soul does not reject the passions, the Holy Spirit will not come to it;nor, on the other hand, unless the Holy Spirit is present can one properly speak of the all-embracing virtue of

dispassion. And if someone were to become dispassionate without the Holy Spirit, he would really be, notdispassionate, but in a state of insensitivity. For this reason even the pagan Greeks, who do not understand thesethings fully, counsel us not to become dispassionate as though without soul, or impassioned as though without mind.When they say 'dispassionate as though without soul', they are speaking in terms of their own knowledge, for theylack the knowledge bestowed by the Holy Spirit. But when they call the impassioned man mindless, we agree withthem. Not that we have learnt it from them, for they had neither true knowledge nor true experience; we have learntit because we have ourselves experienced the tyranny of the passions and so have come to understand why we sufferfrom them.

Again, what we write about the acquisition of the virtues we have learnt from the fathers who were enabled bygrace to attain the state of dispassion. For they say that because of his amity with the passions the highlyimpassioned person becomes like a prisoner and as one who is insensate. Sometimes because of his desire forsomething he rushes forward thoughtlessly like some mindless thing; at other times.

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when anger champions desire, he gnashes his teeth like a wild beast at his fellow-men. The man who has attaineddispassion becomes impassible out of his perfect love for God. At times he meditates on God, at times on thespectacle of some of God's marvelous works or on a passage from the divine Scriptures, as St Neilos explains. Evenif he is in the market place among crowds of people, his intellect acts as if it were alone. This state comes throughkeeping the divine commandments of Christ: to whom be glory and power throughout the ages. Amen.

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XV

Love

To speak of love is to dare to speak of God; for, according to St John the Theologian, "God is love; and he whodwells in love dwells in God' (1 John 4:16). And the astonishing thing is that this chief of all the virtues is a natural

virtue. Thus, in the Law, it is given pride of place: 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and withall your soul, and with all your might' (Deut. 6:5). When I heard the words 'with all your soul' I was astounded, andno longer needed to hear the rest. For 'with all your soul'' means with the intelligent, incensive and desiring powersof the soul, because it is of these three powers that the soul is composed. Thus the intellect should think at all timesabout divine matters, while desire should long constantly and entirely, as the Law says, for God alone and never foranything else; and the incensive power should actively oppose only what obstructs this longing, and nothing else. StJohn, consequently, was right in saying that God is love. If God sees that, as He commanded, these three powers ofthe soul aspire to Him alone, then, since He is good. He will necessarily not only love that soul, but through theinspiration of the Spirit will dwell and move within it (cf. 2 Cor. 6:16; Lev. 26:12); and the body, though reluctantand unwilling - for it lacks intelligence - will end by submitting to the intelligence, while the flesh will no longer risein protest against the Spirit, as St Paul puts it (cf. Gal. 5:17). Just as the sun and moon, at the command of God,travel through the heavens in order to light the world, even though they are soul-less, so the body, at the behest ofthe soul, will perform works of light. As

the sun journeys each day from east to west, thus making one day, while when it disappears night comes, so eachvirtue that a man practices illumines the soul, and when it disappears passion and darkness come until he againacquires that virtue, and light in this way returns to him. As the sun rises in the furthest east and slowly shifts its raysuntil it reaches the other extreme, thus forming time, so a man slowly grows from the moment he first begins topractice the virtues' until he attains the state of dispassion. And just as the moon waxes and wanes every month, sowith respect to each particular virtue a man waxes and wanes daily, until this virtue becomes established in him. Attimes, in accordance with God's

will, he is afflicted, at times he rejoices and gives thanks to God, unworthy as he isto acquire the virtues; and sometimes he is illumined, sometimes filled with darkness, until his course is finished.

All this happens to him by God's providence: some things are sent to keep him from self-elation, and others tokeep him from despair. Just as in this present age the sun creates the solstices and the moon waxes and wanes,whereas in the age to come there will always be light for the righteous and darkness for those who, like me, alas, aresinners, so, before the attainment of perfect love and of vision in God, the soul in the present world has its solstices,and the intellect experiences darkness as well as virtue and spiritual knowledge; and this continues until, through theacquisition of that perfect love to which all our effort is directed, we are found worthy of performing the works thatpertain to the world to be. For it is for love's sake that he who is in a state of obedience obeys what is commanded;and it is for love's sake that he who is rich and free sheds his possessions and becomes a servant, surrendering bothwhat he has and himself to whoever wishes to possess them. He who fasts likewise does so for love's sake, so that

others may eat what he would otherwise have eaten. In short, every work rightly done is done out of love for God orfor one's neighbor. The things we have spoken of, and others like them, are done out of love for one's neighbor,while vigils, psalmody and the like are done out of love for God. To Him be glory, honor and dominion through allthe ages. Amen.

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XVIKnowledge of God

All things that God has created have an origin and, if He wishes, an end, since they were brought into existenceout of non-existence. God, however/has neither origin nor end. The same is true of His virtues, since He was not atany time without them: He is always beyond goodness, righteous, all-wise, all-powerful, unconquerable,dispassionate, uncircumscribed, infinite, unsearchable,

incomprehensible, unending, eternal, uncreated, invariable,unchanging, true, incomposite, invisible, untouchable, ungraspable, perfect, beyond being, inexpressible,inexplicable, full of mercy, full of compassion and sympathy, all-ruling, all-seeing. But, as St Dionysios theAreopagite has said, the fact that God possesses these virtues does not mean that He is compelled to exercise eachone of them, as holy men are: He acts virtuously because He chooses to, and uses the virtues as tools with completefreedom and power over them.

It is from God that, along with their being, angels and holy men have by grace received the virtues, and it isthrough emulating Him that they become righteous, good and wise. Because they are creatures, they have need ofGod's assistance and inspiration, for without this they can possess neither virtue nor wisdom. All creatures aresusceptible to change, and because they are composed of various elements they are called composite. But God isbodiless, simple, unoriginate, one God, worshipped and glorified by all creation in the Father, the Son and the HolySpirit. He who becomes like God has but one will and not many composite wills. His intellect is simple and - so faras this is possible - is always concentrated on what is formless; but by divine providence it descends reluctantly fromthe realm of the formless to the contemplation of some verse of Scripture or aspect of creation: Yet in order not to becondemned, such a person makes provision for his body, not because in his love for it he wishes to keep it alive, butso as not to make it utterly useless and on this account to incur condemnation.

For just as the intellect does not reject the passions that surround it, but uses them in accordance with their traenature, so the soul does not reject the body, but uses it for every good work. And as the

intellect, controlling the mindless impulses of the passions, directs each of them according to the divine will, soman, controlling the members of his body, makes

them subject so a single will and not to many. For he does notallow the four constituent elements of the body, or its many members, to do what they wish, nor does he allow thethree faculties of the soul to act, or impel the body to act, thoughtlessly and licentiously; but, guided by spiritualwisdom, he makes the will of the three faculties one and indivisible. Four principles constitute this wisdom: moraljudgment, self-restraint, courage and justice. St Gregory the Theologian has written about these most excellentlyunder the inspiration of Jesus Christ our Lord: to whom be glory and dominion throughout the ages. Amen.

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XVIIMoral Judgment

Although it is easy for everyone who so wishes to learn from St Gregory about the four principal virtuesmentioned above, yet I will speak briefly about each of them here. Every other virtue has need of them, and everyundertaking has need of the first - moral judgment - for without it nothing can be brought to a successful conclusion.How can anything be accomplished without moral judgment? It is bom of the intelligence and constitutes the meanbetween craftiness - that is, excessive astuteness - and thoughtlessness. Craftiness pulls moral judgment towardscunning and guile, and injures the soul of its possessor and as many other people as it can; lack of thought makesone obtuse and trivial, and does not allow the intellect to concentrate on divine matters or on something of profit toone's soul or to one's neighbor. The first is like a high mountain, the second like a ravine.

The man of moral judgment, then, is he who travels along the plain that lies between these two. But he who straysfrom this path either falls into the ravine or attempts to climb up into the heights and, not finding a way through,plunges in spite of himself headlong into the ravine; nor - is he able to climb out of it, for he refuses to renounce the

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mountain tops and through repentance to turn back to the path of moral judgment. But the person who has faUeninto the ravine calls with humility upon the One who can lead him out again onto the royal road of virtue. The manof moral judgment, however, neither climbs arrogantly upward seeking to harm others, nor descends foolishly onlyto be harmed by someone else. Choosing the middle way, he keeps to this with the help of Christ our Lord, to whombe glory and dominion throughout the ages. Amen.

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XVIIIS elf-Restraint

Self-restraint is a sure and unfailing sense of discretion. It does not permit its possessor to lapse into eitherlicentiousness or obduracy, but safely preserves the blessings reaped through moral judgment while rejecting all thatis bad. At the same time it unites to itself the intelligence and through itself leads the intelligence up toward God.Like a good shepherd it folds the sheep - the divine thoughts - and through refraining from what is harmful it slayslicentiousness as if it were a mad dog. It expels stupidity as though it were a fierce wolf, and prevents it fromdevouring the sheep one by one; but it constantly keeps an eye on such stupidity and reveals it to the intelligence, sothat it cannot lie hidden in the moonless dark and infiltrate among our thoughts.

Self-restraint is bom of the desiring power of the soul. Without it, should any good thing come to pass, it cannotbe preserved; for without self-restraint the soul's three powers are carried either upward towards licentiousness ordownwards towards stupidity. And I do not mean only the licentiousness involved in gluttony and unchastiU', butthat involved in every passion and thought not deliberately nurtured in a manner that accords with God's will. Forself-restraint disciplines all things and bridles the mindless impulses of soul and body, directing them towards God:to whom be glory throughout the ages. Amen.

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XIXCourage

Courage does not consist in defeating and oppressing one's neighbor; for this is overbearingness, which overstepsthe bounds of courage. Nor again does it consist in fleeing terrified from the trials that come as a result of practicingthe virtues; for this is cowardice and falls short of courage. Courage itself consists in persisting in every good workand in overcoming the passions of soul and body. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, that is, againstmen, as was the case with the Jews of old, where to conquer other nations was to do the work of God; it is againstprincipalities and powers, that is, against the unseen demons (cf. Eph. 6:12). He who is victorious conquersspiritually; otherwise he is conquered by the passions. The warfare described in the Old Testament prefigures ourspiritual warfare.

These two passions of overbearingness and cowardice, though they appear to be opposites, are both caused byweakness. Overbearingness pulls one upwards and is outwardly something startling and frightening, like somepowerless bear, while cowardice flees like a chased dog. No one who suffers from either of these two passions putshis trust in the Lord, and therefore he cannot stand firm in battle, whether he is overbearing or cowardly. But therighteous man is as bold as a lion (cf. Prov. 28:1) in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory and dominionthroughout the ages. Amen.

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Justice

St Dionysios the Areopagite says that God is praised through justice. This is true; for without justice all things areunjust and cannot endure. Justice is sometimes called discrimination: it establishes the just mean in everyundertaking, so that there will be no falling short due to over-frugality, or excess on account of greed. For even if

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over-frugality and greed appear to be opposites, the one below and the other above justice, yet they both push us insome way towards injustice. Whether a line is convex or concave, it still deviates from what is straight; and towhichever side the balance tilts, that side gets the better of the other side. But the person able to hold fast to justice isneither dragged down through thoughtlessness, licentiousness, cowardice or greed, like the serpent that goes on itsbelly eating dust (cf Gen. 3:14), a slave to the shameless passions: nor does he fall victim to craftiness andoverbearmgness, to stupidity and over-frugality, to excessive astuteness and cunning. Rather, he 'judges with self-restraint' (Rom. 12:3) and endures with patient humility, fully acknowledging that whatever he possesses he hasreceived by grace, as St Paul puts it (cf 1 Cor. 4:7). For he does an injustice to himself and to his neighbor - or,rather, to God - when he ascribes his own achievements to himself. If he thinks that any good thing he possesses isdue to himself, then what he thinks that he has will be taken away from him, to use the words of our Lord (cf. Matt.13:12): to whom be glory and dominion throughout the ages. Amen.

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Peace

When the Lord said to the apostles, "My peace I give unto you". He added 'not

as the world gives' (John 14:27).He did not, that is to say, give peace in a simple, conventional manner, as people do when they greet one anotherwith the words 'Peace to you", or as the Shunammite woman did when she said 'Peace be with you' (cf. 2 Kgs. 4:23.LXX). Nor did Christ mean the peace that Elisha had in mind when he told Gehazi to say to the Shunammite, 'Isthere peace with you?' (cf. 2 Kgs. 4:26. LXX)-in other words, is there peace with your husband, is there peace withyour son? No, Christ's peace is the peace which transcends every intellect (cf. Phil. 4:7), and which God gives tothose who love Him with all their soul, because of the dangers and battles they have been through.. In the same spiritthe Lord also said, 'In Me you have peace", and added, "In the world you will experience affliction; but havecourage, for I have overcome the

world' (John 16:33). By this He meant that though a person may experience many afflictions and dangers at thehands of demons and other men, these will be as nothing if he possesses the Lord's peace. Again He said, 'Be atpeace with one another' (Mark 9:50). The Lord said all these things to them in advance because they were going tofight and suffer for His sake.

In a similar way each of us faithful is attacked and led astray by the passions; but if he is at peace with God andwith his neighbor he overcomes them all. These passions are the 'world' which St John the Theologian told us tohate (cf 1 John 2:15), meaning that we are to hate, not God's creatures, but worldly desires. The soul is at peacewith God when it is at peace with itself and has become wholly deifomi. It is also at peace with God when it is atpeace with all men, even if it suffers terrible things at their hands. Because of its forbearance it is not perturbed, butbears all things (cf 1 Cor. 13:7), wishes good to .all, loves all, both for God's sake and for the sake of their ownnature. It grieves for unbelievers because they are destroying themselves, as our Lord and the apostles grieved forthem. It prays for the faithful and labors on their behalf, and in this way its own thoughts are filled with peace and itlives in a state of noetic contemplation and pure prayer to God. To Him be glory through all the ages. Amen.

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Joy

'Rejoice in the Lord", said St Paul (Phil. 3:1). And he was right to say, 'in the Lord'. For if our joy is not in theLord, not only do we not rejoice, but in all probability we never shall. Job, as he described the life of men, found itfull of every kind of affliction (cf. Job 7:1-21), and so also did St Basil the Great. St Gregory of Nyssa said that birdsand other animals rejoice because of their lack of awareness, while man, being endowed with intelligence, is neverhappy because of his grief; For, he says, we shave not been found worthy even to have knowledge of the blessingswe have lost. For this reason nature teaches us rather to grieve, since life is full of pain and effort, like a

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state of exile dominated by sin. But if a person is constantly mindful of God, he will rejoice: as the psalmist says, 'Iremembered God, and I rejoiced" (Ps. 77:3. LXX). For when the intellect is gladdened by the remembrance of God,then it forgets the afflictions of this world, places its hope in Him, and is no longer troubled or anxious. Freedomfrom anxiety makes it rejoice and give thanks; and the grateful offering of thanks augments the gifts of grace it hasreceived. And as the blessings increase, so does the thankfulness, and so does the pure prayer offered with tears of

joy.

Slowly the man emerges from the tears of distress and from the passions, and enters fully into the state of spiritual

joy; Through the things that bring him pleasure, he is made humble and grateful; through trials and temptations hishope in the world to come is consolidated; in both he rejoices, and naturally and spontaneously he loves God and allmen as his benefactors. He finds nothing in the whole of creation that can harm him. Illumined by the knowledge ofGod he rejoices in the Lord on account of all the things that He has created, marveling at the care He shows for Hiscreatures. The person who has attained spiritual knowledge not only marvels at visible things, but also is astoundedby his perception of many essential things invisible to those who lack experience of this knowledge.

Thus he looks with wonder not only on the light of day, but also at the night. For the night is a benediction to all:to those practicing the virtues that pertain to the body it offers stillness and leisure; it encourages the remembranceof death and hell in those who grieve; those engaged in practicing the moral virtues it spurs to study and examinemore closely the blessings they have received and the moral state of their soul. In the words of the psalmist, "As youlie in bed, repent of what you say in your heart" (Ps. 4:4. LXX), that is, repent in the stillness of the night,remembering the lapses that occurred in the confusion of the day and disciplining yourself in hymns and spiritualsongs (cf Col. 3:16) - m other words, teaching yourself to persist in prayer and psalmody through attentive medita-tion on what you read. For the practice of the moral virtues is effectuated by meditating on what has happenedduring the day, so that during the stillness of the night we can become aware of the sins we have committed and cangrieve over them.

When in this way through God's grace we make some progress,[V3] 262

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and discover that in truth and not just in fantasy we have realized in either action or thought sonic moral virtue ofsoul or body according to Christ's commandment, then we give thanks with fear and humility; and we struggle topreserve that moral virtue by means of prayer and many tears offered to God, disciplining ourselves to remember itlest we lose it again because of forgetfulness. For it takes much time to make a moral virtue effective in ourselves,while .what has been achieved with so much time and effort can be lost in a single instant.

All this applies to those practicing the virtues. Where the contemplative life is concerned, the night supplies uswith many themes for contemplation, as St Basil the Great has said. First of all, it reminds us daily of the creation ofthe world, since all creation becomes invisible because of the darkness, as it was before it came into existence. Thisin its turn prompts us to reflect how the sky was empty then and without stars, as happens now when they becomeinvisible because of the clouds. When we enter our cell and see only darkness, we are reminded of the darkness thatwas over the abyss (cf. Gen. 1:2); and when suddenly the sky becomes clear again, and we stand outside our cell, we

are struck by wonder at the world above, and offer praise to God, just as the angels are said in the Book of Job tohave praised God when they saw the stars (of. Job 38:7). We see in the mind's eye the earth as it was originally,invisible and without form (cf. Gen. 1:2), and men held fast by sleep as if they did not exist. We feel ourselves alonein the world like Adam and, united with the angels, in fall knowledge we praise the Maker and Creator of theuniverse.

In thunder and lightning we see the day of judgment; in the call of cocks we hear the trumpet that will sound onthat day (cf. 1 Thess. 4:16); in the rising of the morning star and the light of dawn we perceive the appearance of theprecious and life-giving Cross (cf. Matt. 24:30); in men's rising from sleep we see a sign-of the resurrection of thedead, and in the rising of the sun a token of the second advent of Christ. Some, like the saints caught up in clouds onthe last day (cf. 1 Thess. 4:17), we see go forth to greet Him with song, while others, like those who will then bejudged, are indifferent and remain asleep. Some we see rejoicmg throughout the day in the

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offering of praise, in contemplation and prayer, and in the other virtues, living in the light of spiritual knowledge, aswill the righteous at the second coming; while others we see persisting in the passions and m the darkness ofignorance, as will sinners on that day.

In short, the man of spiritual knowledge finds that everything contributes to his soul's salvation and to God'sglory: indeed, it was because of this glory that all things were brought into existence by the Lord and God ofknowledge, as Hannah the mother of the prophet Samuel calls Him (cf 1 Sam. 2:3). 'Therefore let the wise man notvaunt himself because of his wisdom," she said, "or the strong man because of his strength, or the rich man becauseof his wealth; but let him who boasts do so because of his understanding and knowledge of the Lord" (1 Sam. 2:10.LXX). That is to say, let him boast because he knows the Lord with full understanding from His works, and becausehe imitates Him, so far as is possible, through the keeping of His divine commandments. For it is through them thathe knows God and can "work judgment and righteousness in the midst of the earth" (1 Sam. 2:10. LXX), as Goddoes. Hannah spoke these words prophetically concerning the crucifixion and resurrection of the Lord. The gnostic'saspiration, too, is to suffer with the Lord through the acquisition of the virtues and to be glorified with Him throughdispassion and spiritual knowledge, and to boast because of Him, in that, unworthy though he is, he has beenenabled by grace to be a servant of such a master and an imitator of His humility. Then "praise will come from God'(cf. 1 Cor. 4:5). But when will that happen? When He says to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed, inheritthe kingdom" (Matt. 25:34). May we all be found worthy to inherit that kingdom through His grace and love: to Himbe gloiy and dominion throughout the ages. Amen.

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XXIII

Holy Scripture

'Sing the psalms with understanding", says the psalmist (Ps. 47:7); and the Lord says, 'Search the Scriptures'(John 5:39). He who pays attention to them is illumined, while he who pays no attention is

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filled with darkness. For, unless a person attends to what is said in divine Scripture, he will gather but little fruit,even though he sings or reads them frequently. 'Devote yourself to stillness and know", it is written (Ps. 46:10),because such devotion concentrates the intellect: even if it is attentive for only a short time, none the less it knows'in pan', as St Paul puts it (1 Cor. 13:12). This is especially true of the person who has made some progress in thepractice of the moral virtues, for this teaches the intellect many things related to its association with the passions.Nevertheless, he does not know all the mysteries hidden by God in each verse of Scripture, but only as much as mepurity of his intellect is able to comprehend through God's grace. This is clear from the fact that we often understanda certain passage in the course of our contemplation, grasping one or two of the senses in which it was written; thenafter a while our intellect may increase in purity and be allowed to perceive other meanings, superior to the first. Asa result, in bewilderment and wonder at God's grace and His ineffable wisdom, we are overcome with awe before'the God of knowledge", as the prophetess Hannah calls Him (cf 1 Sam. 2:3).

I am not speaking here about the mere act of listening to a passage of Scripture or to some other person; for thisdoes not by itself involve purity of intellect or divine revelation. I am speaking about the person who possessesknowledge but

distrusts himself until he finds another passage from Scripture or from one of the saints that confirmshis spontaneous knowledge of the scriptural passage or of some sensible or intelligible reality. And if instead of onemeaning he should find many as a result of giving attention to either the divine Scriptures or the holy fathers, heshould not lose faith and think that there is a contradiction. For one text or object can signify many things. Takeclothing, for example: one person may say that it warms, another that it adorns, and another that it protects; yet allthree are correct, since clothing is useful alike for warmth, for adornment and for protection. All three have grasped

the purpose assigned by God to clothing; and Holy Scripture and the very nature of-things themselves confirm it.But if someone whose intention is to rob and pilfer should say that clothing exists in order to be stolen, he would bean utter liar, for neither the Scriptures nor the nature of things suggest that it exists for this purpose; and even thelaws punish those who do steal it.

The same applies to everything, whether visible or invisible, and to[V3] 265

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every word of the divine Scriptures. For the saints neither know the whole of God's purpose with regard to everyobject or scriptural text, nor on the other hand do they write down once and for all everything that they do know.This is because in the first place God is beyond comprehension, and His wisdom is not limited in such a way that anangel or man can grasp it in its entirety. As St John Chrysostom says with regard to a certain point of spiritualexegesis, we say about it as much as should be said at the moment, but God, in addition to what we say, knows otherunfathomable meanings as well. And, in the second place, because of men's incapacity and weakness it is not goodfor even the saints themselves to say all that they know; for they might speak at too great a length, thus makingthemselves offensive or unintelligible because of the confusion in their reader's mind. As St Gregory the Theologianobserves, what is said should be commensurate to the capacity of those to whom it is addressed.

For this reason the same saint may say one thing about a certain matter today, and another tomorrow; and yetthere is no contradiction, provided the hearer has knowledge and experience of the matter under discussion. Again,one saint may say one thing and another say something different about the same passage of the Holy Scriptures,since divine grace often gives varying interpretations suited to the particular person or moment in question. The onlything required is that everything said or done should be said or done in accordance with God's intention, and that itshould be attested by the words of Scripture. For should anyone preach anything contrary to God's intention orcontrary to the nature of things, then even if he is an angel St Paul's words, 'Let him be accursed' (Gal. 1:8), willapply to him. This is what St Dionysios the Areopagite, St Antony and St Maximos the Confessor affirm. For thisreason St John Chrysostom says: 'It was not the Greeks but the Holy Scriptures that transmitted these things to us.There is no contradiction when Scripture says about a certain person both that he did not see Babylon as a captiveand, elsewhere, that they took him to Babylon with the rest. For one who reads attentively will find it said about thissame man in another part of Scripture that they blinded him and in dm condition took him off as a captive (cf 2 Kgs.25:7; Jer. 52:11): Thus he went to Babylon, as the one writer says, but did not see it, as the other says.

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Again, some say in their lack of experience that the Epistle to the Hebrews was not written by St Paul, or that StDionysios the Areopagite did not write one of the treatises ascribed to him. But if a man will pay attention to thesesame works, he will discover the truth. If the matter pertains to nature, the saints gain their knowledge of it fromspiritual insight, that is, from the spiritual knowledge of nature and from the contemplation of created beings that isattained through the intellect's purity; and so they expound God's purpose in these things with complete accuracy.Searching the Scriptures, as St John Chrysostom says, like gold-miners who seek out the finest veins. In this waythey ensure that "not the smallest letter or most insignificant accent is lost', as the Lord put it (Matt. 5:18).

Such is the situation with regard to things that pertain to nature. When the matter in question is something that liesbeyond nature, whether it be sensible or intelligible, or even a written phrase, the saints know about it through thegift of prophecy and through revelation, provided that such knowledge is given them by the Holy Spirit. But if thisknowledge is not given them, and if for their own good the matter remains beyond their understanding, they are notashamed to speak the truth and to confess their human weakness, saying with St Paul, 'I do not know; God knows'(2 Cor. 12:2). As Solomon said, "There are three things of which I am ignorant and a fourth which I do not know'(Prov. 30:18. LXX). Again, St John Chrysostom says, 'I do not know; and if the heretics call me an unbeliever, letthem call me a tool as well'

In short, the saints possessed both spiritual and secular knowledge but preferred the first; they made use, however,of their worldly education wisely and for a limited purpose, guided by St Paul's rule not to boast beyond limits (cf. 2Cor. 10:13), as did those Egyptians who, according to the Clementine writings, mocked the prosaic diction of theApostle Barnabas, not realizing that his preaching contained words of life (cf. John 6:68). Many of us are guilty ofdoing the same: when we hear someone speaking with a strange accent we laugh, though he may perhaps be a wiseman in his own tongue and be speaking of awe-inspiring mysteries. This happens because of our inexperience. Butthe fathers themselves often deliberately wrote in a very simple manner, depending on the

particular circumstances and the people for whom they were writing. St Gregory of Nyssa remarks on this when

praising St Ephrem: though he was wise, says Gregory, he wrote simply. Gregory also marvel at the way in which,being deeply versed in theological doctrine, Ephrem refuted with great learning the accursed hooks of a childishheretic, and how the latter, because of his pride, was unable to bear the

shame of this and died.

Saintly humility is something that transcends nature, and an unbeliever cannot achieve it, but thinks that it iscontrary to nature. St Dionysios the Areopagite speaks of this when writing to St Timothy about such men: he saysthat to the ancients the resurrection of the dead appeared contrary to nature, whereas to himself and to St Timothy -and in the eyes of the truth itself - it is not contrary to nature but it transcends nature. This at least is how it looks tous; in God's eyes, however, it does not transcend nature, but is quite natural; for God's commandment is His nature.The fathers had a special love for humility in action and drought, as did the compiler of the Gerontikon, though hewas a bishop and in exile for Christ's sake; for he says with regard to the tattered garment of some virgin that hetook it in order to receive a blessing. And the holy fathers St Dorotheos and St Cassian, though wise, wrote simply. Isay this lest anyone should think that some fathers wrote in a learned manner out of pride, while others wrote in asimple style because of their lack of intelligence. Both alike wrote through the same power of the intellect, conferredby the one Holy Spirit, and their purpose was to be of service to everyone. Had they all written simply, no learnedperson would ever benefit, for he would regard what was written as worthless because of its pedestrian style; nor onthe other hand would a simpler type of person ever benefit had all of them written in a learned style, since he wouldnot have understood the meaning of what was said.

Whoever is experienced in the spiritual interpretation of Scripture knows that the simplest passage is of asignificance equal to that of the most abstruse passage, and that both are directed to the salvation of man. Whoeverlacks such experience, however, is often at a loss, being unaware that secular learning is of great help when it acts asa

vehicle for the higher wisdom of the Sprit For the wisdom of the Spirit bestows

inspired thoughts, while secularlearning provides power of expression, so long as it is accompanied by moral judgment and by the humility thatteaches us to fear both thoughtlessness and craftiness and to "judge with self-restraint', as St Paul puts it (Rom.12:3).

Just as the term "amen", which St Luke translates as "truly" (cf. Luke 9:27), is a stable and decisive wordendorsing what comes before it, so moral judgment is a stable, and decisive form of intellection enabling us tocleave to the tnith. The word "amen" affirms the permanence of the new grace conferred by Christ; hence it is notfound in the Old Testament at all. since the Old Testament is but a prefiguration. In the New Testament, however, it

is used everywhere because this testament will endure for ever and through all the ages.

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How many tears would I like to shed whenever I gain even a partial glimpse of myself! If I do not sin, I becomeelated with pride; while if I sin and am able to realize it, in my dismay I lose heart and begin to despair. If I takerefuge in hope, again I become arrogant. If I weep, it feeds my presumption; if I do not weep, the passions visit meagain. My life is death, yet death seems even worse because of my fear of punishment. My prayer proves a source oftemptation to me, and my inattention a cause of disaster. 'He that increases knowledge increases sorrow," saysSolomon (Eccles. 1:18). I am at a loss, beside myself, and do not know what to do. And should I know, and then notdo it, my knowledge would contribute to my condemnation. Alas, what shall I choose? In my ignorance all thingsseem contradictory and I cannot reconcile them. I do not find the virtue and wisdom hidden in my trials, since I donot endure these trials with patience. I flee from stillness because of my evil thoughts, and so I find myself beset bythe

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passions that tempt me through the senses. I want to fast and to keep vigil, but am impeded by presumption andlaxity. I eat and deep lavishly, and sin without knowing it. I withdraw myself from everything and flee out of fear ofsm, but listlessness is again my undoing.

Yet I realize that many, because they had a firm faith, received crowns of victory after going through battles andtrials like these. It was because of their faith that they were granted fear of God; and through this fear they wereenabled to practice the other virtues. Had I faith as they had, I would have found this fear through which, accordingto the prophet, I would have received true piety and spiritual knowledge; and from this knowledge would have comestrength, counsel, understanding and the wisdom of the Holy Spirit (cf. Isa. 11:2). These are the gifts conferred on

those who, free from anxiety, wait on God and devote themselves to the Holy Scriptures with the patience thatmakes it possible to view all things, whether from above or from below, with an equal mind.

Time and experience make it clear when a particular passion has been transformed into virtue. When, on the otherhand, a virtue veers towards passion, time and experience permit us to set them apart through patient endurance. Forif such endurance is not bom in the soul out of faith, the soul cannot possess any virtue at all. 'You will gainpossession of your souls through your patient endurance', said the Lord (Luke 21:19), who alone has fashioned thehearts of men, as the psalmist puts it (cf. Ps. 33:15). From this it is dear that the heart, that is, the intellect, comesinto possession of itself through the patient endurance of what befalls it. For if we believe that someone else isinvisibly guiding our life, how can we ever obey our own thoughts when they say 'I want this" or 'I do not want it","This is good' or 'This is bad"? If we had some visible guide, we would ask him about everything, would hear thereply and carry into effect what was said. But even when we do not have a visible guide, we do have Christ, as thebishop of Evchaita remarks. We should therefore put questions to Him through prayer from the heart, in faith hopingHis answer will manifest itself in

our thoughts and actions. Otherwise Satan, not being able to affect us in ouractions, may answer us in our

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thoughts, pretending that he is the guide and in this way dragging us to perdition because we lack patient endurance.

It is those lacking such endurance who in their ignorance impetuously hurry on to seize what they have not yetbeen given, failing to realize that one day in the eyes of the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as asingle day (cf, Ps. 90:4). But he who by enduring patiently has gained experience of the devil's machinations willfight and strive forward with patience so as to reach the goal, as St Paul puts it (cf. 1 Cor. 9:26; Phil. 3:12). He willbe able to say, 'We are not ignorant of Satan's devices' (2 Cor. 2:11), that is, of the devil's invisible ploys, unknownto most men. For St Paul says, "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light' (2 Cor. 11:14); and there isnothing surprising in this, since the thoughts that he causes to appear in our heart seem to be righteous thoughts tothose who lack experience.

For this reason it is good to say 'I do not know', so that we neither disbelieve what is said by an angel nor placecredence in what occurs through the deceitfulness of the enemy. By thus accepting patiently whatever comes wemay avoid both pitfalls. We may wait for many years until the answer is given us, unsolicited and unperceived, inthe form of some concrete action-as someone has put it with reference to the contemplation of created beings. In thisway we reach the haven of active spiritual knowledge. When we see this knowledge persisting in us over manyyears, then we will understand that truly we have been heard and have invisibly received the answer.

Someone prays, for example, for victory over those who fight against him. He hears nothing and sees no deceitfulsign; or even if he does hear or see

something, either in sleep or when awake, he gives it absolutely no credence. Butafter a certain length of time he observes that the battle is being won by God's grace and that certain thoughts are

drawing his intellect towards humility and the knowledge of his own weakness. Yet he still does not put his trust inthis, fearing that it might be deception, but waits for many years. It was such an attitude, according to St JohnChrysostom, that Christ wanted to induce in the apostles: that is why He warned them of coming tribulations,adding, 'He who endures to the end will be saved' (Matt. 10:22), so that they would not grow careless or over-confident, but would

struggle on out of fear. For a person derives no benefit from the other virtues, even though he dwells in heaven, if heis in the grip of the presumption that led to the fall of the devil, Adam and many others.

Hence we should never abandon fear until we have reached the haven of perfect love and are no longer in theworld or the body. Even the person who has reached that haven will not abandon such fear of his own accord.Rather, by virtue of his great faith his intellect is freed from all anxiety about the life and death of the body, and heattains the pure fear that is inspired by love. St Athanasios the Great was referring to this fear when he told theperfect not to fear God as a tyrant, but to fear Him because of His love; that is, they should fear Him not simplybecause they sin, but because they are loved without themselves showing love, thus receiving His blessingsunworthily. It is through fear in the face of such blessings that God leads the soul towards love, so that through itsgratitude to Him it may become worthy of the good things that have been and will be bestowed on it. Then by meansof the pure fear inspired by love the soul attains the humility that transcends nature.

For no matter how many blessings a person in the state of pure fear receives, or

how many appalling things hesuffers, he never for a moment thmks that it is due to his own strength and understanding that he is able to endure orprosper in soul and body. On the contrary, in his humility he has received the discrimination by means of which herealizes that he is a creature of God, and that of himself he can do nothmg good and cannot even preserve what hasbeen given him by grace; and that he can neither remove temptation nor endure it through his own courage andjudgment. By means of discrimination he thus attains a certam degree of spiritual knowledge and begins to see allthings with the eye of the intellect. But, ignorant of the inner principles of these things, he longs for the Teacher; yethe fails to find Hnn, because He is invisible. At the same time he is unwilling to accept anyone else because hisdiscrimination tells him - although there is no dear evidence for this - that anyone else may be an impostor; so he isat a loss, and as a result regards all that he has done and all that he has been taught as nothing.

For he sees how many men, beginning with Adam, have fallen in

spite of their efforts and their knowledge; and he reahzes as well that, though he hears, yet he does hot understandwhat is said in the Holy Scriptures. This knowledge - the knowledge that in fact he does not know as he shouldknow - brings him to tears. It is indeed truly astonishing that, if a man thinks he knows, he knows nothing yet (cf 1Cor. 8:2); and that what he thinks he has will be taken from him, as the Lord says (cf Matt. 13:12) - that is, will betaken away because he thinks he has it while he does not have it. Thus the man who acknowledges that he is stupidand witless, ignorant and weak, weeps and laments because he thought he had received what he now realizes that hedoes not have.

Humility is bom of many virtues, and in its turn gives birth to things more perfect still. It is the same with spiritualknowledge, thanksgiving, prayer and love, since these virtues are always capable of increase. For example, a

personbecomes humble and grieves because he is a sinner. In consequence of this he begins to practice self-control andpatient endurance in the face of afflictions sought and unsought. What comes from the demons he endures throughascetic discipline, and what comes from men he endures as a test of his faith. In this way it becomes dear whether heputs his trust in God, or in man, or in his own strength and judgment. And when his worthiness has been proved byhis patient endurance and by his entrusting all things to God, he receives that great faith to which Christ referredwhen He said, 'When the Son of man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8). Through such faith hegains victory over his enemies; and when he has achieved this, then through the power of God and through thewisdom granted him he becomes aware of his own weakness and ignorance.

As a result of this he begins to give thanks with a humble soul, and he trembles with fear lest he should relapseinto disobedience. Because of this pure fear - fear which is not due to the fact that he has sinned - and because of thethankfulness, patient endurance and humility which have been bestowed on him as a result of his knowledge, hebegins to have hope that by God's grace he will obtain mercy. In the light of his experience of the blessings he hasreceived, he watches and fears lest he should be found unworthy of such gifts from God. Hence he receives greaterhumility and more intense prayer from the heart; and the more these increase, together with thankfulness, the greaterthe knowledge he receives. Thus he

advances from knowledge to fear, and from fear to thankfulness, and so he attains the knowledge that transcends allthese. As a consequence, he comes truly to love his Benefactor and longs to serve Him with joy, indebted as he is toGod for the knowledge bestowed upon him.

At once he receives a still farther increase of knowledge, and he contemplates

not just the blessings he personallyhas been granted, but also those that are universal. Not being able to give thanks adequately for these, he grieves;and then, again marveling at the grace of God, he is consoled. At times he weeps painfully; at tnnes, because of hislove, his tears are made sweeter than honey by the spiritual joy that comes from ineffable humility. When in trath helongs for God's will to be done in everything and abhors every honor and comfort; when he regards himself as lowerthan all other men and does not even think that he is anybody at all, but holds himself indebted to God and to allmen as much as to God, then he will consider trials and afflictions to be great blessings, and enjoyment and comfortto be extremely harmful. For trials and afflictions he longs with all his soul, wherever they may come from;enjoyment and comfort he fears, even though they may be sent by God to test him.

While he is experiencing the tears of which we have spoken, his intellect begins to attain purity and to return to itspristine state, that is, to the state of natural spiritual knowledge which it lost through its amity with the passions. Bysome this is called moral judgment, since the intellect 'then sees things as they are by nature; by others it is calledspiritual insight, since he who possesses it knows something at least of the hidden mysteries - that is, of God'spurpose-in the Holy Scriptures and in every created thing. Such natural knowledge springs from discrimination, andenables us to perceive the inner principles of things sensible and intelligible. On account of this it is known as thecontemplation of created beings, that is, of God's creation. It is natural and comes from purity of intellect. But if forthe common good a person receives the gift of prophecy, he has attained something that transcends nature; for onlyGod foreknows all things, as well as the purpose for which He created each thing and inspired each word of HolyScripture; and it is by grace that He grants such knowledge to the saints.

Thus, the contemplation of sensible and intelligible creation.

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sometimes called moral judgment, is also a form of spiritual insight and of natural spiritual knowledge - 'natural'since it pre-exists in nature. But when the passions darken the intellect, it is lost; and unless God removes thepassions through our practice of the virtues, the intellect remains blinded. The gift of prophecy, however, is of adifferent order, for it transcends nature and is granted only by grace. Yet even natural spiritual knowledge cannot beattained without God, though it is natural; for the pagan Greeks perceived many things but, as St Basil the Great hassaid, they were unable to discern God's purpose in created beings, or even God Himself, since they lacked thehumility and the faith of Abraham.

A person is said to have faith when, on the basis of what he can see, he believes in what he cannot see. But tobelieve in what we can see of God's works is not the same as to believe in Him who teaches and proclaims the truthto us. Hence the trials sent to test our faith are visible, while God's assistance comes to us invisibly. In this way, theperson who in faith endures these trials patiently will discover, once they have passed, that he has acquired spiritualknowledge, through which he knows things previously unknown to him, and that blessings have been bestowed onhim. As a result he gains humility together with love both towards God, as his benefactor, and towards his fellow-men for the healing wrought by God through them. He regards this as something "natural, and yet as a debt, whichfills him with the desire to keep God's commandments. He hates the passions as his enemies and pays scantattention to the body, considering it an obstacle to his attainment of dispassion and of the knowledge of God, that is,of hidden wisdom" (1 Cor, 2:7).

This wisdom is rightly called 'hidden'. If someone seeks for success and pleasure, comfort and glory in thisworld, then he loves the wisdom of this world. But if someone struggles for what is contrary to these things - if hesuffers, practices self-control, and endures all kinds of affliction and disgrace for the sake of the kingdom of heaven- then he loves the wisdom of God. The first longs to attain material benefits, secular learning and secular power,and often suffers on this account; but the second shares the sufferings of Christ. Thus the first places all his hopes inthe things of this world, desiring to possess them even though they are transitory and hard to come by; while thesecond is hidden from "the eyes of the foolish", as Holy Scripture puts it (Wisd. 3:2), but is clearly revealed in theworld to come, when everything

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hidden is disclosed. Moreover, according to St John Chrysostom the knowledge of what is hidden-that is, thecontemplation of the divine Scriptures and of created beings-is given as an encouragement to those who grieve inthis world. For from faith is bom fear, and from fear comes inward grief. This in turn produces humility, whichgives rise to discrimination. Discrimination, finally, gives birth to spiritual insight and, by God's grace, to the gift ofprophecy.

The gnostic ought not to rely in any way on his own thoughts, but should always seek to confirm them in the lightof divine Scripture or of the nature of things themselves. Without such confirmation, there can be no trae spiritualknowledge, but only wickedness and delusion, as St Basil the Great says when speaking about the stars. DivineScripture names only a few stars, while the pagan Greeks in their delusion give names to many. For the intention ofdivine Scripture is to speak of things that can save the soul, and to reveal to us the mysteries it contains in itself, aswell as the inner principles of created beings, that is, the purpose for which each thing was created. In this way itaims to illumine our intellect with the love of God, and to enable it to perceive His greatness and His inexpressiblewisdom and providence, as they are revealed in His care for His creation. Such knowledge makes us afraid ofbreaking His commandments and conscious of our own weakness and ignorance. This in its turn makes us humbleand teaches us to love God and not to despise His commandments, as do those who lack effective knowledge ofHim. Moreover, God withholds some of the mysteries from us, so that we may long for them and not be quicklysated, as was Adam, whom the enemy caught off his guard and led into his own base ways.

This, then, is the position of. those who have acquired the virtues. Those who lack knowledge, on the other hand.God alarms with trials and temptations so that they will refrain from sin: at the same time He: encourages them bybestowing on them bodily blessings so as to keep them from despair. God in His unbounded goodness does this atall times so that He may save all men and free them from

the snares of the devil, either by conferring on them or elseby withholding from them His favors and knowledge. According to the gratitude of each He bestows His gifts anddivine thoughts. Similarly, in accordance with the propensity of each reader and with what is to his profit, God

either conceals the meaning of Holy Scripture or allows it to be known.

The aim of the teachers of secular wisdom was different, for each was eager to defeat the other and to appearwiser; hence they did not discover Christ, nor do those who emulate them, in spite of all their efforts. For, as St JohnKlimakos says, God reveals Himself, not in response to our exertions, but in response to the humility and simplicitythat come through faith, that is, through the contemplation of the Scriptures and of created beings. On this accountthe Lord said, 'How can you have faith when you receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor thatcomes from the only God?" (John 5:44). This is that great faith which makes it possible for us to put all our caresinto the hands of God. The apostle calls it the foundation (cf. Heb. 6:1), St John Klimakos, the mother of stillness,and St Isaac, the faith of contemplation and the gateway of the mysteries. He who possesses this faith is completelyfree from worry and anxiety, as were all the saints.

The saints, like the righteous men of old, even had names to suit them. Peter's name, that comes from the Greekword for 'rock', indicates his firmness; Paul's name, that comes from the Greek word for 'rest', refers to the 'rest'he found in Christ; James is called the 'tripper up', because he tripped up the devil; and Stephen - from the Greekword for 'crown' - is named from the unfading crown he won; Athanasios means 'deathless' in Greek; Basil means'kingdom"; Gregory signifies 'vigilance',' for he was vigilant in wisdom and theology; Chrysostom, meaning'golden-mouthed' in Greek, is so named from his rich style and admirable grace in speaking; and Isaac meansforgiveness.

In short, in both the Old and the New Testament, the names given are appropriate. Thus Adam was named fromthe four Cardinal points; for the four letters of his name are the initial letters of the Greek words for East, West,North and South. Man, in the Syrian language, was denoted by the word for "fire", because of the similitude of hisnature to that of fire. For the whole of humanity is descended from one man, just as from a single lamp one can lightas many others as one wishes without the first suffering any loss. But, after the

confusion of the tongues (cf. Gen. 11:1 -9), in one language the name 'man' is derived from the forgetfulness whichman incurred another from his other characteristics. The Greek language derives its word for 'man' from the factthat he looks upward; yet his chief natural quality is his intelligence: it is for this reason that he is called anintelligent being, since he alone has this quality. As regards the other qualities from which he is named, there aremany other created beings with which he shares them.

Hence we ought to abandon all other things and as intelligent beings cleave to the intelligence, offering with theintelligence intelligible worship to the divine Intelligence. Then we will be found worthy to receive from Him in this

present age, in return for human words, the divine words of the Holy Spirit. For it is said of God that He 'givesprayer to him who prays' (1 Sam. 2:9. LXX); and indeed to one who truly prays the prayer of the body God givesthe prayer of the intellect; and to one who diligently cultivates the prayer of the intellect, God gives the imagelessand formless prayer that comes from the pure fear of Him. Again, to one who practices this prayer effectively. Godgrants the contemplation of created beings. Once this is attained-once the intellect has freed itself from all thingsand, not content with hearing about God at second hand, devotes itself to Him in action and thought - God permits itto be seized in rapture, conferring on it the gift of true' theology and the blessings of the age to be.

Thus spiritual knowledge is good if it fills its possessor with shame and so leads him involuntarily towardshumility, making him think that he possesses such knowledge unworthily; indeed, according to St John Klimakos, inhis humility he even rejects it as harmful, God-given though it may be. Yet how disastrous if it affects him as itaffected that monk who was torn apart by the triple-teethed prongs of the demons! He was so greatly respected andloved that all mourned his death and thought it a great loss. Yet he was a victim of hidden pride; and the person whohas told us about him heard from on high the words, 'Allow him no rest, for never for a single moment did he giverest to Me.' Alas, someone whom everyone called a saint, and through whose prayers many hoped to be saved froma host of trials and temptations, came to such an end because he thought so

highly of himself. And it is obvious that the reason was his pride. For had it been some other sin, he would not haveteen able to take everyone in or to commit it continuously. It is true that, had it been heresy, he would havecontinually angered God through his willful blasphemy; but heresy does not remain concealed for ever. ThroughGod's providence it is revealed, so that he who holds it may recant, provided he is willing to; if he is not, then it isrevealed in order to safeguard other people.

Thus it is self-satisfied haughtiness alone that can escape the notice of everyone. It all but escapes the notice evenof its victim, unless he is permitted to fall into temptations which put his soul to the test and allow him to recognizehis own weakness and ignorance. Thus not even for a single moment was the Holy Spirit given rest in the haplesssoul of that monk, since he was always preoccupied with the thought of his own excellence and rejoiced in thisthought as though it were some lofty achievement. For this reason he was filled with darkness, as are the demons.Moreover, in order to conceal his fault, he nourished this single passion instead of all the others. And this wassufficient for the demons since, as St John Klimakos says, this single passion is capable of taking the place of theother

vices.

I am not here recording something that I discovered with my own understanding and discrimination, but I writewhat I have learnt from the saint who was my spiritual father. He also told me of an occasion on which St Antonythe Great ordered St Paul the Simple to cast the demon out of a certain girl. St Paul did not at once prostrate himselfand obey, but made objections, asking St Antony why he did not cast the demon out himself. It was only after StAntony told him that he was otherwise occupied that St Paul finally obeyed. On account of Paul's procrastination,said my spiritual father, the demon did not obey at once, but only went out of the girl after Paul had struggled for along time. That things are in fact like this can be believed not only on the testimony of the holy elder, but also fromthe washing of the disciples' feet in the Bible (cf John 13:6-8), as well as from the account of Moses' argument withthe Lord (cf. Exod. 4:10), and from the story of the prophet who asked someone to strike him (cf. 1 Kgs. 20:35-42).

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Because this latter story incapable of a spiritual interpretation which has not been given elsewhere, I will recountit here. A certain king ruled his kingdom so tyrannically that God, in His love for mankind, could not endure thistyranny and commanded his prophet to go and rebuke that king. The prophet, however, knew the king's cruelty anddid not wish simply to go to hmi, lest seeing him from afar and surmising the reason for which he had come, theking would drive him away and thus prevent him from carrying out his task; or lest, if he was given audience andbegan by saying, "My God has sent me here because of your cruelty", the king would not pay attention to what wassaid. Instead he devised a plan whereby he would be struck by somebody and then go, covered with blood, as if hewere lodging a complaint; in this way he would deceive the king and force him to listen to what he had to say.

As the prophet was going along he came upon someone at the roadside who had

an axe, and he said to him, 'Thussays the Lord, take your axe and strike my head.' But the other, being a devout man, said, "Certainly not; I am a manof God and will not lay a hand on the Lord's anointed.' Then the prophet said, 'Thus says the Lord: as you did notobey the voice of the Lord, let a lion come from the desert and devour you.' This was not done in anger - Godforbid! It happened for the benefit of all. This righteous man deserved not to die in an ordinary fashion like othermen, but to be devoured by a wild beast in accordance with God's word and so to receive a crown of glory becauseof his bitter death. The Gerontikori records a similar story. Four priests made a pact and prayed that, when they hadfallen asleep in Christ, their servant should be eaten by a lion because of his unchastity. But the Lord did not hearthem, and chose rather to listen to the hesychast who was praying for the servant so that the lion would not touchhim.

To return to the prophet. He then found another man, who was obedient, and he said to him, 'Thus says the Lord:lift your axe and strike my head.' This man, when he heard the words, 'Thus says the Lord', without hesitation

struck the head of the prophet with his axe, and the prophet said to him, in words similar to those used by Moseswhen he spoke to the children of Levi, 'The blessing of the Lord be upon you, for you have listened to the voice ofthe Lord' (cf Exod. 32:29).

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Thus the first man, in his great devoutness, respected the prophet and did not obey him, like Peter at the washing ofthe feet (cf John 13:8); while the other obeyed without further thought, as the sons of Levi were obedient to Moseswhen they slew then-brethren (cf. Exod. 32:26-29).

Judging by outward appearances, he who obeys the will of God does the better thing, for he obeys thesupranatural command of the Lord of nature, which he regards as wiser and more righteous than natural knowledge;whereas he who

disobeys does a lesser thing, in that he regards his own opinion about what is right as morerighteous than the word of God. But if we look deeper, things turn out to be different. What matters is the motivebehind the obedience or disobedience; and so he whose motive is to do God's will has chosen the better path. In thepresent case, to all appearances God seems to be angry with the man who is disobedient and to bless the man who isobedient. But in reality it is not so, as has been said already: from the viewpoint of natural contemplation both wereequally good, since the motive of both was to do God's will.

Then the prophet went to the king and standing before him said, 'Give me justice, 0 king! For as I was comingsomeone met me on the road and struck my head." And the king, seeing the wound and the blood, became angry inhis usual way, but not with the prophet; and, thinking that he was condemning someone else, and not himself, hedenounced with extreme severity the man who had wounded the prophet. Then the prophet, having achieved what hewanted, said, "You have spoken well, 0 king, for thus says the Lord: I shall surely tear this kingdom from your handsand from your seed, for it is you that have done these things.' Thus the prophet delivered his message as he wished,skillfully compelling the king to pay attention to what he said. He then departed, praising God.

Such, then, were the souls of the prophets. They loved God and, because of their knowledge of God, they wereeager to suffer for the sake of His will. This is natural; for he who is familiar with a certain path or a certain skillpursues it readily and easily, with assurance explaining to others the direction of the path or the secrets and finerpoints of the craft; and he often does this even though he is young in years and lacks formal training, while those towhom he is explaining things may be advanced in years and wise in other matters. For the prophets, apostles andmartyrs did not gain their knowledge of God

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and their wisdom at second hand, as we have gained ours. On the contrary, they poured out their blood and receivedthe Spirit, exemplifying the words of the fathers: 'Spill your blood and receive the Spirit.' Thus the fathers sufferedmartyrdom, not in an outward sense, but in their conscience: instead of undergoing physical death they showedthemselves willing to die, and in this way their intellect proved victorious over all earthly desires and reigns inChrist Jesus our Lord. To Him be glory and dominion, honor and worship, now and always and throughout the ages.Amen.

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St Symeon Metaphrastis

Paraphrase of the Homilies

ofSt Makarios of Egypt

(lOth century)(Volume 3, pp. 282-353)

Introductory Note

The Makarian Homilies were attributed in the past to St Makarios the Great of Egypt (c. 300-c. 390). A Copticmonk, priest and spiritual father in the desert of Sketis, he figures prominently in the Lausiac History of Palladios^and in the Sayings of the Desert Fathers,^ and is commemorated in the Church's calendar on 19 January. But thisascription is open to doubt for many reasons: in particular, the early sources say nothing whatever about anywritings by Makarios of Egypt, while the background presupposed by the Homilies is not Egyptian but Syrian. Allthat can be said with any confidence is that the Homilies are the work of an unknown author, writing probably inSyria or Mesopotamia during the late fourth or the early fifth century.

There are similarities in language and symbolism, and sometimes also in thought, between the Homilies andMessalianism, an ascetic movement that originated in Syria in the late fourth century and spread rapidly to otherparts of the Christian East. Some scholars have even concluded that the Homilies are in reality the Ascetic Book' ofthe Messalians, and on somewhat slender evidence they attribute them to Symeon of Mesopotamia, one of theleading Messalians. Other specialists, without denying the points of resemblance, argue that they should not beexaggerated. The heretical teachings characteristic of extreme

Messalianism are not in fact to be found in theHomilies; when language and symbols associated with the Messalians are employed, they are used in afundamentally Orthodox way.

' See chapter 17.

^ See Apophthegmata, alphabetical collection, P.G. Ixv, 257-81; E.T., pp. 124-38. Cf. also The Phrlokalia, vol. i, p. 29.

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Indeed, the Homilies may continue to be regarded, today as in the past, as an authentic expression of EasternChristian spirituahty at its best.^

St Nikodimos and St Makarios included in the Philokalia, not the original text of the Homilies - which, whilelively, is also repetitive and diffuse - but an eleventh-century adaptation attributed to St Symeon Metaphrastis ('theTranslator': not to be confused with St Symeon the New Theologian). Symeon Metaphrastis followed anadministrative career in the civil service, rising to the high rank of logothete or chancellor, which he held under theEmperors Nikiphoros II Phokas (963-9), John I Tzimiskis (969-76) and Basil II (976-1025). It is thought that hebecame a monk at the end of his life, and he is commemorated on 9 November. Probably he is to be identified withthe chronicler Symeon Magistros. A voluminous writer, he is chiefly remembered for his edition of \he Menologionor Lives of the Saints. He is also probably the author of the prayers for use before and after communion, oftenascribed to his namesake Symeon the New Theologian. The Greek title in the Philokalia states that Symeon hasparaphrased the main group of Fifty Homilies (known as collection II),' but in reality most of the material comesfrom another group of Twenty-Six Homilies (collection IV).^

In his selection" St Symeon Metaphrastis has embodied the master- themes that dominate the MakarianHomilies: the constant conflict or 'unseen warfare' (§ 146) in the depths of the human heart between grace andSatan, between the Holy Spirit and the spirit of evil; the 'co-operation' or synergeia (§41) between divine grace andhuman free will; the need for direct personal experience, for a 'full and

conscious assurance' (§ 106) of theindwelling presence of the

' For a thorough discussion of the whole subject, see the works of H. Dorries, especially

Symeon von Mesopotamien. Die Oberlieferung der messalionischen 'Makarios'-Schriften (Texte und Unteruchungen 55, 1: Leipzig, 1941);Die Theologie des MakariosISymeon (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Gottingen, Philologisch-Historische Klasse, DritteFolge, Nr 103: Gottingen, 1978). A brief summary of the evidence, with further bibliography, is provided by V. Desprez and M. Canevet, inDictionnaire de Spiritualite x (1977), col. 20-43. For an Orthodox viewpoint, see J. Meyendorff, 'Messalianism or Anti-Messalianism? A FreshLook at the "Macarian" Problem', in Kyriakon. Festschrift Johannnes Ouasten, vol. ii (Munster, 1971), pp. 585-90; reprinted in ByzantineHesychasm: historical, theological and social problems (Vanorum Reprints: London, 1974), chapter xv.

^ Die 50 Geisthchen Homilien des Makarios, ed. H. D6rries, E. Klostennann and M. Kroeger (Pairistiche Texte und Studien 4: Berlin, 1964).

'See I)ictionnaire de Spiritualite x, col. 21.

" In P.G. xxxiv, 821-41, there is a further treatise 'On the Guarding of the Heart', immediately preceding the other six treatises; this is absentfrom the Philokalia.

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Holy Spirit - a theme taken up and developed by St Symeon the New Theologian. Much is said about theresurrection glory of the human body at the last day (§§61-3, 140-1), but it is also insisted that the saints experiencehere and now a genuine foretaste of the glory of the age to come: the final resurrection is simply the outward andbodily manifestation of what is already hidden during this present life in the souls of the righteous. The passages onthe vision of divine light (§§137-9) anticipate the teaching of St Gregory Palamas and the fourteenth-centuryHesychasts.

While the Makarian Homilies do not underestimate the need for 'labour and sweat of the brow' (§51), whatchiefly distinguishes them is their sense of communion with the Holy Spirit, and of the love and joy that Heimparts. With their message of encouragement, their vigorous style and simple illustrations, it is not surprising thatthey should often be given as reading to novices at their first entry to the monastery.

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ISpiritual Perfection

1. We receive salvation by grace and as a divine gift of the Spirit. But to attain the full measure of virtue we needalso to possess faith and love, and to struggle to exercise our free will with integrity. In this manner we inheriteternal life as a consequence of both grace and justice. We do not reach the final stage of

spiritual maturity throughdivine power and grace alone, without ourselves making any effort; but neither on the other hand do we attain thefinal measure of freedom and purity as a result of our own diligence and strength alone, apart from any divineassistance. If the Lord does not build the house, it is said, and protect the city, in vain does the watchman keepawake, and in vain do the laborer and the builder work (cf. Ps. 127:1 -4).

2. What is the will of God that St Paul urges and invites each of us to attain (cf. 1 Thess. 4:3)? It is total cleansingfrom sin, freedom from the shameful passions and the acquisition of the highest virtue. In other words, it is thepurification and sanctification of the heart that comes about through fully experienced and conscious participation inthe perfect and divine Spirit. 'Blessed are the pure in heart," it is said, 'for they shall see God' (Matt. 5:8); and again:'Become perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48). And the psalmist says: 'Let my heart be unerringin Thy statutes, so that I am not ashamed" (Ps. 119:80); and again: 'When I pay attention to all Thy commandments,then I will not be ashamed" (Ps. 119:6). And to the person that asked, "Who will ascend the Lord's hill, or who willstand in His holy place?" The psalmist replied: "He that has clean hands and a pure heart" (Ps. 24:3-4), that is to say,he who has completely destroyed sin in act and thought.

3. The Holy Spirit, knowing that the unseen and secret passions are hard to get rid of - for they are as it wererooted in the soul - shows us through the psalmist how we can purify ourselves from

them. 'Cleanse me from my secret faults', writes the psalmist (Ps. 19:12), as though to say that through much prayerand faith, and by turning completely to God, we are able, with the help of the Spirit, to conquer them. But this is

oncondition that we too strive against them and keep strict watch over our heart (cf Prov. 4:23).

4. Moses indicates figuratively that the soul should not be divided in will between good and evil, but shouldpursue the good alone; and that it must cultivate not the dual fruits of virtue and vice but those of virtue only. For hesays: 'Do not yoke together on your threshing floor animals of a different species, such as ox and ass; but yoketogether animals of the same species and so thresh your com' (cf. Deut. 22:10). This is to say, do not let virtue andvice work together on the threshing floor of your heart, but let virtue alone work there. Again he says: 'Do notweave flax into a woolen garment, or wool into a linen garment" (cf. Deut. 22:11); and: "Do not cultivate two kindsof fruit together on the same patch of your land' (cf. Deut. 22:9). Similarly, you are not to mate an animal of onespecies with an animal of another species, but to mate like with like. All this is a concealed way of saying that youmust not cultivate virtue and vice together in yourself, but you must devote yourself singlemindedly to producingthe fruits of virtue; and you must not share your soul with two spirits - the Spirit of God and the spirit of the world -but you must give it solely to the Spirit of God and must reap only the fruits of the Spirit. It is for this reason that thepsalmist writes: 'I have prospered in all Thy commandments; I hate every false way' (Ps. 119:128).

5. The virgin soul that desires to be united to God must keep itself pure not only from overt sins like unchastity,murder, theft, gluttony, backbiting, falsity, avarice, greed and so on; but to an even greater degree it must keep itselfpure from sins that are hidden, such as desire, self-esteem, love of popularity, hypocrisy, love of power, wiliness,malice, hatred, unbelief, envy, self-love, affectation and other things of this kind. According to Scripture, theseconcealed sins of the soul are just as pernicious as the overt sins. "The Lord has scattered the bones of those whoseek to please men', it says (Ps. 53:5. LXX); and: The Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man' (Ps. 5:6), thusmaking it clear that deceitfulness is just as abhorrent to God as murder. Again, it numbers among the "workers ofiniquity' those who 'speak peace to their neighbor but have evil in their hearts' (Ps. 28: 3),

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and elsewhere it speaks of those who commit lawless acts in their hearts (cf. Ps. 58:2). It also says: 'Woe to you,when men speak well of you' (Luke 6:26) - that is to say, when you want to hear people say good things about youand when you hang upon their glory and praise. It is true that those who do good cannot escape notice altogether.Indeed, the Lord Himself says: 'Let your light shine before men' (Matt. 5:16), though here it is understood that wedo good for the glory of God and not for our own glory or because we desire men's praise. If this is not the case,then we are lacking in faith, as the Lord makes clear when He says: 'How can you have faith when you receivehonor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?' (John 5:44). St Paul bids us to doeverything, even to eat and to drink, for the glory of God; "for." he says, 'whether you eat or drink, or do anythingelse, do it for the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). And St John equates hatred with murder when he says: 'Whoeverhates his brother is a murderer' (1 John 3:15).

6. 'Love bears with all things, patiently accepts all things; love never fails' (1 Cor. 13:7-8). This phrase 'never fails'makes it clear that, unless they have been granted total deliverance from the passions through the most complete andactive love of the Spirit, even those who have received spiritual gifts are still liable to falter: they are still in danger,and must struggle in fear against the attacks launched on them by the spirits of evil. St Paul shows that not to be indanger of falling or liable to passion is such a lofty state that the tongues of angels, prophecy, all knowledge andgifts of healing are as nothing compared to it (cf. 1 Cor. 13:1-8).

7. St Paul has here indicated the goal of perfection so that everyone, realizing his poverty in the face of suchrichness, may long for it intensely and may strive forward along the spiritual path until he attains it. As has beensaid: 'Run, that you may reach your goal" (1 Cor. 9:24).

8. To deny oneself (cf. Matt. 16:24) is to be ready to give up everything for the brethren's sake and not to followone's own will in anything, or to possess

anything except one's own clothes. He who attains this state, and is thusfreed from all things, joyfully does only what he is asked to do. He regards all the brethren, and especially thesuperiors and those appointed to bear the burdens of the monastery, as lords and masters for Christ's sake. In thisway he obeys Christ who

said: 'He among you who wants to be first and pre-eminent, let him be the last of all and the servant and slave ofair(cf Mark 9:35), not inviting any glory, honor or praise from the brethren for his service and conduct. He servesthe brethren with complete goodwill, with love and simplicity, not with outward show and with an eye to gainingpopularity, but regarding himself as a debtor in everything.

9. The superiors of the community, who shoulder a great burden, must fight the crafty designs of evil with theweapon of humility, lest because of the authority they exercise over their subordinate brethren they grow proud andso act to their own detriment rather than to their profit. They should be like compassionate fathers, in the name ofGod giving themselves bodily and spiritually to the service of the community, keeping watch over the brethren and

constantly looking after them as children of God. Outwardly they should not disown the rank of superior, as forinstance in giving orders or advice to the more experienced monks, or in punishing or rebuking someone whennecessary, and in encouraging where it is appropriate; otherwise, on the grounds that they are being humble orgentle, they will introduce confusion into the monastery through not preserving the due order of superiors andsubordinates. But inwardly, in their own minds, they should regard themselves as unworthy servants of all theirbrethren, and as teachers entrusted with the Lord's children; and with unreserved goodwill and fear of God theyshould do all they can to make each of

the brethren apt for every good work, knowing that the reward they willreceive from God for such labor will be great and inalienable.

10. There are times when servants whose task it is to instruct the young do not hesitate in all charity to beat themfor the sake of discipline or good behavior, even if those they punish are the children of their own masters.Similarly, superiors should punish those of the brethren in need of discipline, yet not in anger or haughtiness, or forpersonal revenge, but with compassion and with a view to their reform and spiritual profit.

11. He who wants to be stamped with the virtues should pursue before everything else and at all times fear of Godand holy love, the first and greatest of the commandments (cf. Matt. 22:38). Let him continually beseech the Lord tosend this love into his heart, and thus let him advance and grow, augmenting it by grace day by day through theceaseless and unbroken remembrance of God. Through diligence

and effort, concern and struggle he becomes capable of acquiring love for God, given form within him by the graceand bounty of Christ. Through such love the second commandment, love for one's neighbor (cf Matt. 22:39), caneasily be attained. Let these two primary commandments take precedence over the others and let him pursue themmore than the others. In this way the secondary commandments will follow naturally on the primary. But should heneglect this first and great commandment, the love for God that is formed with divine help from our innerdisposition, our clear conscience and our life-giving remembrance of God, then in consequence of this neglect hecannot soundly and purely accomplish the second commandment, that requires simply the outward diligence ofservice. For the guile of evil, finding the intellect void of the

remembrance of God, and of love and longing for Him,will make the divine commandments appear harsh and laborious, kindling in his soul grumbling, resentment andcomplaints about having to serve the brethren; or else it will deceive him with the presumption of self-righteousness,filling him with arrogance and making him think that he is of great importance and worthy of esteem, and that he

has entirely fulfilled the commandments.

12. When a man thinks that he is keeping the commandments perfectly, it is obvious that he is mistaken and thathe is breaking one of them, since he judges himself and does not submit to the true judge. But when, in St Paul'swords (cf. Rom. 8:16), the Spirit of God testifies along with our spirit, then indeed we are worthy of Christ and arechildren of God. This is not the case", however, when we justify ourselves merely on the basis of what we ourselvesthink. It is not the man who commends himself that is to be trusted, but he whom Christ commends (cf. 2 Cor.10:18). When a man lacks the remembrance and fear of God, it is inevitable that he will long for glory and will seekfor praise from those whom he serves. As has already been explained, such a person is called an unbeliever byChrist; for He says: 'How can you have faith when you receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honorthat comes from the only God?" (John 5:44).

13. As has been said, love for God can be attained through the intellect's great struggles and labors in holymeditation and in unremitting attention to all that is good. The devil, on the contrary, impedes our intellect, notletting it devote itself to divine love

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through the remembrance of what is good, but enticing the senses with earthly desires. For the intellect that dwellsundistractedly in the love and remembrance of God is the devil's death and, so to say, his noose. Hence it is onlythrough the first commandment, love for God, that genuine love for one's brother can be established, and that truesimplicity, gentleness, humility, integrity, goodness, prayer and the whole beautiful crown of the virtues can beperfected. Much struggle is needed, therefore, and much inward and unseen travail, much scrutiny of our thoughtsand training of our soul's enfeebled organs of perception, before we can discriminate between good and evil, andstrengthen and give fresh life to the afflicted powers of our soul through the diligent striving of our intellect towardsGod. For by always cleaving to God in this way our intellect will become one spirit with the Lord, as St Paul puts it(cf 1 Cor. 6:17).

14. Those aspiring to the state of virtue must strive to fulfill the commandments by sustaining this inwardstruggle, travail and meditation unceasingly night and day, whether praying or serving, eating or drinking, or doinganything else. In this way, if any good comes about it will be to God's glory and not to their own. The fulfillment ofthe commandments presents no difficulty or trouble to us when it is facilitated by the love of God and when this loverelieves it of all that is burdensome. As has been said, the whole effort of the enemy is directed towards distracting

the intellect from the remembrance, fear and love of God, and to turning it by means of earthly forms and seductionsaway from what is truly good towards what appears to be good.

15. The patriarch Abraham, when he was receiving Melchisedec, the priest of God, made him an offering fromthe firstfruits of the earth and so obtained his blessing (cf. Gen. 14:19-20). Through this incident the Spirit indicatesthat the first and highest elements of our constitution - the intellect, the conscience, the loving power of the soul -must initially be offered to God as a holy sacrifice. The firstfruits and the highest of our true thoughts must becontinually devoted to remembrance of Him, engrossed in His love and in unutterable and boundless longing forHim. In this way we can grow and move forward day by day, assisted by divine grace. Then the burden of fulfillingthe commandments will appear light to us, and we will carry them out faultlessly and irreproachably, helped by theLord Himself on account of our faith in Him.

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16. Where outward ascetic practice is concerned, which virtue is the most important? The answer to this is that thevirtues are linked one to the other, and follow as it were a sacred sequence, one depending on the other. For instance,prayer is linked to love, love to joy, joy to gentleness, gentleness to humility, humility to service, service to hope,hope to faith, faith to obedience, and obedience to simplicity. Similarly, the vices are linked one to another: hatred toanger, anger to pride, pride to self-esteem, self-esteem to unbelief, unbelief to hardheartedness, hardheartedness tonegligence, negligence to sluggishness, sluggishness to apathy, apathy to listlessness, hstlessness to lack ofendurance, lack of endurance to self-indulgence, and so on with all the other vices.

17. The devil tries to soil and defile every good thing a man would do by intermingling with it his own seeds inthe form of self-esteem, presumption, complaint, and other things of this kind, so that what we do is not done forGod alone, or with a glad heart. Abel offered a sacrifice to God of the fat and firstlings of his flock, while Cainoffered gifts of the fruits of the earth, but not of the firstfruits: and that is why God looked with favor on Abel'ssacrifices, but paid no attention to Cain's gifts (cf Gen. 4:3-5). This shows us that it is possible to do somethinggood in the wrong way - that is to say, to do it negligently, or scornfully, or else not for God's sake but for someother purpose; and for this reason it is unacceptable to God.

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18. The crown of every good endeavor and the highest of achievements is dihgence in prayer. Through it Godguiding us and lending a helping hand, we come to acquire the other virtues. It is in prayer that the saints experiencecommunion in the hidden energy of God's holiness and inner union with it, and their intellect itself is broughtthrough unutterable love into the presence of the Lord. "Thou hast given gladness to my heart", wrote the psalmist(Ps. 4:7); and the Lord Himself said that 'the kingdom of heaven is within you' (cf Luke 17:21). And what does thekingdom being within mean except that the heavenly gladness of the Spirit is clearly stamped on the virtuous soul?For already in this life, through active communion in the Spirit, the virtuous soul receives a foretaste and a preludeof the delight, joy and spiritual gladness which the saints will enjoy in the eternal light of Christ's kingdom. This issomething that St Paul also affirms: "He consoles us in our afflictions, so that we can console others in everyaffliction through the consolation with which we ourselves have been consoled by God" (2 Cor. 1:4). And passagesin the Psalms likewise hint at this active gladness and consolation of the Spirit, such as: 'My heart and my flesh haverejoiced in the living God' (Ps. 84:2. LXX): and: 'My soul will be filled with marrow and fatness" (Ps. 63:5).

19. Just as the work of prayer is greater than other work, so it demands greater effort and attention from the personardently devoted to it, lest without him being aware the devil deprives him of it. The greater the good a person has inhis care, the greater the attacks the devil launches on him; hence he must keep strict watch, so that fruits of love andhumility, simplicity and goodness - and, along with them, fruits of discrimination - may grow daily from theconstancy of his prayer. These will make evident his progress and increase in holiness, thus encouraging others tomake similar efforts.

20. Not only does St Paul instruct us to pray without ceasing and to persist in prayer (cf. 1 Thess. 5:17; Rom.12:12), but so also does the Lord when He says that God will vindicate those who cry out to Him day and night (cfLuke 18:7) and counsels us to 'watch and pray" (Matt. 26 : 41). We must therefore pray always and not lose heart

(cf. Luke 18:1). To put things more succinctly: he who persists in prayer has to struggle greatly and exert himselfrelentlessly if he is to overcome the many obstacles with which the devil tries to impede his diligence - obstaclessuch as sleep, listlessness, physical torpor, distraction of thought, confusion of intellect, debility, and so on, not tomention afflictions, and also the attacks of the evil spirits that violently fight against us, opposing us and trying toprevent the soul from approaching God when it truly and ceaselessly seeks Him.

21. He who cultivates prayer has to fight with all diligence and watchfulness, all endurance, all struggle of souland toil of body, so that he does not become sluggish and surrender himself to distraction of thought, to excessivesleep, to listlessness, debility and confusion, or defile himself with turbulent and indecent suggestions, yielding hismind to things of this kind, satisfied merely with standing or kneeling for a long time, while his intellect wanders faraway. For unless a person has been trained in strict vigilance, so that when attacked by a flood of useless thoughts hetests and sifts them all, yearning always for the Lord, he is readily seduced in many unseen ways by the devil.Moreover, those not yet capable of persisting in prayer can easily grow arrogant, thus allowing the machinations ofevil to destroy the good work in which they are engaged and making a present of it to the devil.

22. Unless humility and love, simplicity and goodness regulate our prayer, this prayer - or, rather, this pretence ofprayer - cannot profit us at all. And this applies not only to prayer, but to every labor and hardship undertaken forthe sake of virtue, whether this be virginity, fasting, vigil, psalmody, service or any other work. If we do not see inourselves the fruits of love, peace, joy, simplicity, humility, gentleness, guilelessness, faith, forbearance andkindliness, then we endure our hardship to no purpose. We accept the hardships in order to reap the fruits. If thefruits of love are not in us, our labor is useless. In such a case we differ in nothing from the five foolish virgins:because their hearts were not filled here and now, in this present life, with spiritual oil - that is to say, with theenergy of the

Spirit active in the virtues of which we have spoken - they were called fools and were abjectly excluded from theroyal bridechamber, not enjoying any reward for their efforts to preserve their virginity (cf Matt. 25:1-13). Whenwe cultivate a vineyard, the whole of our attention and labor is given in the expectation of the vintage; if there is novintage, all our work is to no purpose. Similarly, if through the activity of the Spirit we do not perceive withinourselves the fruits of love, peace, joy and the other qualities mentioned by St Paul (cf. Gal. 5:22), and cannot affirmthis with all assurance and spiritual awareness, then our labor for the sake of virginity, prayer, psalmody, fasting andvigil is useless. For, as we said, our labors and hardships of soul and body should be undertaken in expectation ofthe spiritual harvest; and where the virtues are concerned, the harvest consists of spiritual enjoyment andincorruptible pleasure secretly made active by the Spirit in faithful and humble hearts. Thus the labors and hardships

must be regarded as labors and hardships and the fruits as fruits. Should someone through lack of spiritualknowledge think that his work and hardship are fruits of the Spirit, he should realize that he is deluding himself, andin this way depriving himself of the truly great fruits of the Spirit.

23. The person who has surrendered himself entirely to sin indulges with enjoyment and pleasure in unnatural andshameful passions - licentiousness, unchastity, greed, hatred, guile and other forms of vice - as though they werenatural. The genuine and perfected Christian, on the other hand, with great enjoyment and spiritual pleasureparticipates effortlessly and without impediment in all the virtues and all the supranatural fruits of the Spirit - love,peace, patient endurance, faith, humility and the entire truly golden galaxy of virtue - as though they were natural.He does not fight any longer against the passions of evil, for he has been totally set free of them by the Lord; whilefrom the blessed Spirit he has received Christ's perfect peace and joy in his heart. Of such a man it may be said thathe cleaves to the Lord and has become one spirit with Him (cf. 1 Cor. 6:17).

24. Those who because of their spiritual immaturity cannot yet commit themselves entirely to the work of prayershould undertake to serve the brethren with reverence, faith and devout fear. They should do this because theyregard such service as a divine commandment and a spiritual task; they should not expect reward.

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honor or thanks from men, and they should shun all complaint, haughtiness, negligence or sluggishness. In this waythey will not soil and corrupt this blessed work, but through their reverence, fear and joy will make it acceptable toGod.

25. The Lord descended to the human level with such love, goodness and divine compassion for us, that He took itupon Himself not to overlook the reward of any good work, but to lead us step by step from the small to the greatvirtues, so that not even a cup of cold water should go unrequited. For He said: "If anyone gives even a cup of coldwater to someone simply in the name of a disciple, I tell you truly that he will not go unrewarded" (cf Matt. 10:42);and elsewhere: "Whatever you did to one of these, you did to Me" (cf. Matt. 25:40). Only the action must be done inthe name of God, not for the sake of receiving honor from men: the Lord said, "simply in the name of a disciple",that is to say, in the fear and love of Christ. Those who do good with ostentation are rebuked categorically by theLord: 'I tell you truly, they have received their reward" (Matt. 6:2).

26. Simplicity before others, guilelessness, mutual love, joy and humility of every kind, must be laid down as thefoundation of the community. Otherwise, disparaging others or grumbling about them, we make our labor profitless.He who persists ceaselessly in prayer must not disparage the man incapable of doing this, nor must the man whodevotes himself to serving the needs of the community complain about those who are dedicated to prayer. For ifboth the prayers and the service are offered in a spirit of simplicity and love for others,

the superabundance of thosededicated to prayer will make up for the insufficiency of those who serve, and vice versa. In this way the equality

that St Paul commends is maintained (of. 2 Cor. 8:14): he who has much does not have to excess and he who haslittle has no lack (cf. Exod. 16:18).

27. God's will is done on earth as in heaven when, in the way indicated, we do not disparage one another, andwhen not only are we without jealousy but we are united one to another in simplicity and in mutual love, peace andjoy, and regard our brother's progress as our own and his failure as our loss.

28. He who is sluggish in prayer, and slothful and negligent in serving his brethren and in performing other holytasks, is explicitly called an idler by the apostle, and condemned as unworthy even of his bread. For St Paul writesthat the idler is not to have any food (cf. 2 Thess. 3:10);

and elsewhere it is said that God hates idlers, that the idle man cannot be trusted, and that idleness has taught greatevil (cf. Ecclus. 33:27). Thus each of us should bear the fruit of some action performed in God's name, even if hehas employed himself diligently in but one good work. Otherwise he will be totally barren, and without any share ineternal blessings.

29. When people say that it is impossible to attain perfection, to be once and for all free from the passions, or toparticipate fully in the Holy Spirit, we should cite Holy Scripture against them, showing them that they are ignorantand speak falsely and dangerously. For the Lord said: 'Become perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Matt.5:48), perfection denoting total purity; and: 'I desire these men to be with Me wherever I am, so that they may seeMy glory' (John 17:24). He also said: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will not pass away' (Matt.24:35). And St Paul is saying the same as Christ when he writes: '. .

. so that we may present every man perfect inChrist" (Col. 1:28); and:". . . until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to aperfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ' (Eph. 4:13). Thus by aspiring to perfection two ofthe best things come about, provided we struggle diligently and unceasingly: we seek to attain this perfect measureand growth; and we are not conquered by vanity, but look upon ourselves as petty and mean because we have notyet reached our goal.

30. Those who deny the possibility of perfection inflict the greatest damage on the soul in three ways. First, theymanifestly disbelieve the inspired Scriptures. Then, because they do not make the greatest and fullest goal ofChristianity their own, and so do not aspire to attain it, they can have no longing and diligence, no hunger and thirstfor righteousness (cf Matt. 5:6); on the contrary, content with outward show and behavior and with minoraccomplishments of this kind, they abandon that blessed expectation together with the pursuit of perfection and ofthe total purification of the passions. Third, thinking they have reached the goal when they have acquired a few

virtues, and not pressing on to the true goal, not only are they incapable of having any humility, poverty andcontrition of heart but, justifying themselves on the grounds that they have already arrived, they make no efforts toprogress and grow day by day.

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the 'new creation" of the pure heart (cf 2 Cor. 5:17) are rightly and explicitly likened by the apostle to those who,because of their unbelief, were found unworthy of entering the promised land and whose bodies on that account'were left lying in the desert' (Heb. 3:17). What is here outwardly described as the promised land signifies inwardlythat deliverance from the passions which the apostle regards as the goal of every commandment. This is the truepromised land, and for its sake these figurative teachings have been handed down. In order

to protect his disciplesfrom yielding to unbelief the apostle says to them: 'Make sure, my brethren, that no one among you has an evil heartof unbelief, turning away from the living God" (Heb. 3:12). By 'turning away" he means not the denial of God butdisbelief in His promises. Interpreting the events of Jewish history allegorically and indicating their true meaning, hesays: "For some, when they heard, were rebellious, though not all of those who were brought out of Egypt by Moses.And with whom was God angry for forty years? Was it not with those who had sinned, whose bodies were left lyingin the desert? And to whom did He vow that they would not enter into His rest unless it was to those who refused tobelieve? We see, then, that it was because of their unbelief that they could not enter" (Heb. 3:16-19). And hecontinues: "Let us be fearful, then: although the promise of entering into His rest still holds good, some of you maybe excluded from it. For we have heard the divine message, as they did; but the message that they heard did notprofit them, since it was not accompanied by faith on their part. We, however, who have faith do enter into God'srest" (Heb. 4:1-3). Shortly after this he draws the same conclusion: 'Let us strive therefore to enter into that rest, sothat no one may fall through copying this example of unbelief (Heb. 4:11). For Christians what true rest is thereother than deliverance from the sinful passions and the fullest active indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the purifiedheart? And the apostle again impels his readers towards this by referring to faith: 'Let us then draw near with a trueheart and in the full assurance of faith, our hearts cleansed of an evil conscience" (Heb. 10:22). And again: "Howmuch more will the blood of Jesus purge our conscience of dead works, so that we may serve the living and trueGod" (cf. Heb. 9:14). Because of the measureless blessings promised by God to men in these words, we shoulddedicate ourselves as grateful servants and regard what is promised as true and

certain. In this way, even if through sluggishness or debility of resolution we do not give ourselves once for all toour Maker, or if we do not strive to achieve the

greatest and most perfect measure of virtue, none the less through anupright and undistorted will and a sound faith we may attain some degree of mercy.

32. Prayer rightly combined with understanding is superior to every virtue and commandment. The Lord Himselftestifies to this. For in the house of Martha and Mary He contrasted Martha, who was engaged in looking after Him,with Mary, who sat at His feet joyfully drinking the ambrosia of His divine words. When Martha complained andappealed to Christ, He made clear to her what takes precedence, saying: 'Martha, Martha, you are anxious andtroubled about many things; one thing alone is needful: Mary has chosen what is best, and it cannot be taken awayfrom her' (Luke 10:41-42). He said this not in order to disparage acts of service, but so as to distinguish clearly whatis higher from what is lower. For how could He not give His sanction to service when He Himself performed suchservice in washing His disciples' feet, and was so far from discountenancing it that He bade His disciples to behavein the same way towards each other (cf John 13:4-16)? Moreover, the apostles themselves, when they wereoppressed by serving at table, also singled out prayer and understanding as the higher form of work. 'It is not right',they said, 'for us to abandon the word of God in order to serve at table. Let us appoint chosen men, full of the HolySpirit, for this service; we will devote ourselves to the ministry of the Logos and to prayer' (cf. Acts 6:2-4). In thisway they put first things before secondary things, although they recognized that both spring from the same blessedroot.

St Symeon Metaphrastis

Paraphrase of the Homihes

ofSt Makarios of Egypt

IIIPatient Endurance and Discrimination

33. The signs that accompany those who wish to submit to the Logos of God and who bring forth good fruit are:sighing, weeping, sorrow, stillness, shaking of the head, prayer, silence, persistence, bitter grief, tribulation of heartarising from religious devotion. In addition, their actions manifest vigilance, fasting, self-control, gentleness,forbearance, unceasing prayer, study of the divine Scriptures, faith, humilit)', brotherly affection, submission,rigorous toil, hardship, love, kindliness, courtesy and-the sum of all-light, which is the Lord. The signs

thataccompany those who are not producing the fruit of life are listlessness, day-dreaming, curiosity, lack of attention.

grumbling, instability; and in their actions they manifest gluttony, anger, wrath, back-biting, conceit, untimely talk,unbelief, disorderliness, forgetful-ness, unrest, sordid greed, avarice, envy, factiousness, contempt, garrulity,senseless laughter, willfulness and - the sum of all - darkness, which is Satan.

34. In accordance with divine providence, the devil was not sent at once to the Gehenna assigned to him, but hissentence was postponed in order to let him test and try men's free will. In this way, he unintentionally fosters greatermaturity and righteousness in the saints by promoting their patient endurance, and so is the cause of their greaterglory; and, at the same time, through his malevolence and his scheming against the saints he justifies more fully hisown punishment. In this way, too, sin becomes more utterly sinful, as St Paul puts it (cf. Rom. 7:13).

35. By deceiving Adam and in this way gaining mastery over him, the devil deprived him of his authority andproclaimed himself lord of this world. For in the beginning God appointed man to be the lord of this world and themaster of visible things (cf. Gen. 1:26). On this account, fire had no power over him, water did not drown him, noanimal injured him, poisonous snakes had no effect on him. But once he

had been deceived, he surrendered his lordship to his deceiver. For this reason sorcerers and magicians, through theuse of diabolic energy, become with God's permission miracle-workers: they have power over poisonous snakes andthey challenge fire and water, as was exemplified by the followers of Jannes and Jambres who opposed Moses (cf.Exod. chs. 7-8; 2 Tim. 3:8), and by the Simon who resisted the chief apostle, Peter (cf. Acts 8:18-24).

36. When the devil beheld Adam's original glory shining from the face of Moses (cf. Exod. 34 : 30-31), he wascut to the quick since he saw in this a sign of the coming destruction of his kingdom. St Paul's words, 'Death heldsway from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned" (Rom. 5:14), may be taken to refer to this. In myopinion the glorified face of Moses preserved the type and example of the first man created by the hands of God. Itis for this reason that when death - that is to say, the devil, who is the cause of death - saw it, he then guessed thathis kingdom would fall, as in fact happened with the advent of the Lord. Genuine Christians are thereforeencompassed by this glory even in this present life; and inwardly they have annulled death, that is to say, theshameful passions, which cannot operate within them, since the glory of the Holy Spirit shines fully and consciouslyin their souls. In the resurrection, moreover, death is totally abolished.

37. When, using the woman as his accomplice, the devil deceived Adam, he divested him of the glory thatenveloped him. Thus Adam found himself naked and perceived his disfigurement, of which he had been unaware

until that moment since he had dehghted his mind with celestial beauty. After his transgression, on the other hand,his thoughts became base and material, and the simplicity and goodness of his mind were intertwined with evilworldly concerns. The closing of paradise, and the placing of the cherubim with the burning sword to prevent hisentrance (cf. Gen. 3:24), must be regarded as actual events; but they are also realities encountered inwardly by eachsoul. A veil of darkness-the fire of the worldly spirit-surrounds the heart, preventing the intellect from communingwith God, and the soul from praying, believing and loving the Lord as it desires to do. All these things may be learntfrom experience by those who truly entrust themselves to the Lord, persist in prayer, and fight zealously against theenemy.

38. The lord of this world is a rod of chastisement and a scourge to[V3] 301

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beginners in the spiritual life. Yet, as has been said, he brings them great glory and added honor because of theafflictions and trials they endure. In this way he helps them to attain the state of perfection, while he prepares evengreater and harsher punishment for himself. In short, something most beneficial is brought about through him: as hasbeen said, evil, while intending what is not good, contributes to the good. For, in souls whose intention is sound,even that which appears harmful results in something good. As St Paul says: "All things work together for good tothem that love God' (Rom. 8:28).

39. It is on this account that the rod of chastisement was permitted, so that through it, as in a furnace, the vesselsmight be more rigorously fired; but those unequal to the test, being easily broken, are rejected as faulty, since theycannot endure the heat of the fire. Being a servant and the Lord's creation, the devil tests and afflicts people, not ashe thinks fit or desires, but to the extent that his Master allows him. Knowing the exact nature of everything, Godpermits each person to be tested according to his strength. As St Paul puts it: 'God is to be trusted not to let you betried beyond your strength, but with the trial He will provide a way out, so that you are able to bear it' (1 Cor.10:13).

40. As the Lord affirms, the person who seeks and knocks and who never gives up asking will attain what he asksfor (cf Matt. 7:8). Only he must have the courage to entreat continually with intellect and tongue, and to cleave toGod relentlessly with bodily worship; and he must not entangle himself in worldly things or indulge in evil passions.He who said, 'Whatever you ask for in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Matt. 21:22), is not a liar. Those whosay that even if you fulfill all the commandments in the hope of attaining grace in this present life, you will gainnothing, are ignorant and what they say is wrong and contrary to divine Scripture. There is no injustice in God thatwould make Him fail to fulfill His obligations if we fulfill ours. Only you must see to it that when the time comes

for your soul to leave your hapless body you are still engaged in spiritual struggle, pressing on, awaiting thepromise, persevering, trusting, seeking with discrimination. Do not disbelieve me when I say that you will go forthjoyfully, with confidence, and you will be found worthy to see the kingdom of God. Indeed, if your soul is refinedthrough your faith and ardor, you are already in communion with God. The person who looks lustfully at a womanhas already committed adultery with her in his heart (cf. Matt. 5:28), and even if he has not sullied his body isregarded as already

guilty of adultery. Similarly, the person who expels evil from his heart and who cleaves to God with longing,supplication, diligence and love, already enjoys communion with God, and has even now received from God thisgreat gift, that he can persist in prayer diligently and devotedly. If the giving of a cup of cold water does not gounrewarded (cf. Matt. 10:42), how much more will God give what He has promised to those who devote themselvesto Him night and day?

41. Those who are troubled by what will happen to them if one day they find themselves full of hatred for theirbrother, or realize that involuntarily they are in the grip of some other evil passion, should be told that they need tostruggle without intermission against the devil and evil thoughts. For where the darkness of the passions and death -that is to say, the will of the flesh - hold sway, it is impossible for some evil fruit not to manifest itself, visibly orinvisibly. A bodily wound, even if it only discharges slightly, exudes moisture and festers or is puffy and swells up,until it is totally healed. This is so even when it is being treated and when no remedy is wittingly omitted. But if thefestering is neglected it can lead to the corruption of the whole body. In a similar way the soul's passions, even ifthey receive great attention, will go on smoldering within the soul until with steadfast diligence they are finallycured through the grace and co-operation of Christ. For there is a certain hidden pollution and a strange darkness ofthe passions that, in spite of man's pure nature, have insinuated themselves into the whole of humanity as a result ofAdam's transgression; and they obscure and defile both body and soul. But just as iron when fired and struck ispurified, or gold mixed with copper or iron is separated out by fire, so through the most pure Passion of the Saviorthe soul, fired and struck by the Holy Spirit, is cleansed of every passion and of every sin.

42. Just as many lamps may be lit from the same oil and from a single light, and yet often do not give out an equalradiance, so the gifts that come from different virtues reflect the light of the Holy Spirit in different ways. Or as themany

inhabitants of a single city all use bread and water, though some of them are men, some infants, somechildren, some old people, and there is a great variety and difference among them; or as wheat sown in the samefield may bear dissimilar ears of com, though they are all brought to the same threshing-floor and stored in the same

bam: so it seems to me that in the resurrection of the dead different degrees of glory will be distinguished andrecognized among those who are resurrected, depending on the level of virtue they

have attained and the extent of their participation during this present life in the Holy Spirit that already dwells withinthem. This is the significance of the phrase, 'Star differs from star in glory" (1 Cor. 15:41).

43. Even if some stars are smaller than others, they all shine with a single light. The image is quite clear; but let usgive attention to one thing only: after being bom in the Holy Spirit, to wash away our indwelling sin. Once this birththrough the Holy Spirit has taken place, it means that an image of perfection is active within us in an initial form,though it is not yet expressed in terms of power, intellect or courage. Whoever has attained the full measure ofmature manhood naturally lays aside childish things (cf 1 Cor. 13:11). That is why St Paul says that speaking intongues and prophecies will come to an end (cf 1 Cor. 13:8). Just as an adult does not eat foods or use words fittingfor a child, but scorns them as unworthy of him, since he has entered another stage of life, so the person whoapproaches perfection in the evangelic virtues ceases to be an infant with respect to that perfection. To quote St Paulagain, 'When I grew up I finished with childish things'(l Cor. 13:11).

44. The person who is bom in the Spirit is in a certain manner perfect, just as we call an infant perfect when all hislimbs are sound. But the Lord has not bestowed

the grace of the Spirit so that one may fall into sin. Men arethemselves the cause of the evils into which they fall: not living in accordance with grace they are taken captive byevil. Man can lapse through his own natural thoughts if he is negligent or inattentive or presumptuous. St Paulhimself says: To stop me from growing unduly elated I was given a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan' (2Cor. 12:7). You see how even those who have attained such great heights as St Paul stand in need of protection. Yetif man did not give the devil the opportunity he would not be forcibly dominated by him. Because of this, his actionsare not to be imputed either to Christ or to the devil. But if finally he submits to the grace of the Spirit, he is on theside of Christ. If this is not the case, even though he is bom in the Spirit - that is to say, even though he participatesin the Holy Spirit- yet because of his actions he follows the will of Satan. For if it were the Lord or Satan who hadforcibly seized hold of him, then he himself would not be the cause of his falling into hell or of his attaining God'skingdom.

45. He who follows the spiritual path must pay great attention to

discrimination, since the ability to distinguish between good and evil, and to scrutinize and understand the varioustricks through which the devil by means of plausible fantasies leads most people astray, keeps us safe and helps us inevery way. If a man wanting to test his wife's virtue comes to her at night disguised as someone else, and she repelshim, he will rejoice at this and welcome the assurance it gives. It is exactly the same with us in relation to the attacksof the evil spirits. Even if you repel the heavenly spirits, they will be gladdened by this, and will help you toparticipate still further in grace: because of this proof of your love for the Lord they will fill you brim-full withspiritual delight. So do not from light-mindedness speedily surrender yourself to the visitations of spirits, even ifthey are heavenly angels, but be wary, submitting them to the most careful scrutiny. Thus you will welcome thegood and repel the evil. In this way you will increase in yourself the workings of grace, which sin, however much itmay

assume the appearance of the good, cannot altogether simulate. According to St Paul, Satan can even changehimself into an angel of light in order to practice his deceptions (cf 2 Cor. 11:14); yet though he may manifesthimself in such a glorious manner, he cannot, as we said, produce within us the effects of grace, and so it becomesquite clear that the vision is counterfeit. For the devil cannot bring about love either for God or for one's neighbor,or gentleness, or humility, or joy, or peace, or equilibrium in one's thoughts, or hatred of the world, or spiritualrepose, or desire for celestial things; nor can he quell passions and sensual pleasure. These things are clearly theworkings of grace. For the fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, and so on (cf. Gal. 5:22), while the devil is mostapt and powerful in promoting vanity and haughtiness. You may know from its effect whether the intellectual lightshining in your soul is from God or from Satan. Indeed, once it has developed its powers of discrimination, thedistinction is immediately clear to the soul itself through intellectual perception. Just as the throat through its senseof taste distinguishes the difference between vinegar and wine, although they look alike, so the soul through itsintellectual sense and energy can distinguish the gifts of the Spirit from the fantasies of the devil.

46. The soul must watch and anticipate carefully so that it is not even for the twinkling of an eye taken captive bythe devil's power. Even if only one part of an animal is caught in a trap, the whole animal is held fast and falls intothe hands of the hunters; and the same thing is

liable to happen to the soul at the hands of its enemies. The psalmist makes this quite clear when he says: 'Theyprepared a trap for my feet and bowed down my soul' (Ps. 57:6. LXX).

47. He who wants to enter the strong man's house through the narrow gate and to

make off with his goods (cf.Matt. 7:14; 12:29) must not surrender to luxury and obesity, but must strengthen himself in the Holy Spirit, havingin mind the phrase, 'Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God' (1 Cor. 15:50). But how should hestrengthen himself in the Spirit? Here he should heed the words of St Paul, that God's wisdom is regarded asfoolishness by men (cf. 1 Cor. 1:23), as well as those of Isaiah, that he had seen the son of man, and His form wasdespised, and He was forsaken by all the sons of men (cf. Isa. 53:3). Thus he who wants to be a son of God mustfirst humble himself in the same way and be regarded as foolish and despicable, not turning his face aside when spatupon (cf. Isa. 50:6), not pursuing the glory and beauty of this world or anything of this kind, not having anywhere tolay his head (cf Matt. 8:20), vilified, mocked, downtrodden, regarded by all as an object of contempt, attackedinvisibly and visibly, yet resisting in his mind. It is then that the Son of God, who said, 'I will dwell and walk amongyou' (cf. Lev. 26:12), will become manifest in his heart, and he will receive power and strength so that he can tie thestrong man up and make off with his goods (cf. Matt. 12:29), and tread upon asp and basilisk (cf. Ps. 91:13. LXX),snakes and scorpions (cf. Luke 10:19).

48. No little struggle is required of us to break through death. Christ says: 'The kingdom of God is within you'(Luke 17:21); but he who fights against us and takes us captive also finds some way of being within us. The soul,therefore, must not rest until it has killed him who takes it prisoner. Then all pain, sorrow and sighing will flee away(cf. Isa. 35:10), because water has sprung up in thirsty earth (cf. Isa. 43:20) and the desert has become full of waters(cf. Isa. 41:18).For He has promised to fill the barren heart with living water, speaking first through the prophetIsaiah, saying: 'I will give water to those who are thirsty and who walk through dry land' (Isa. 44:3. LXX); and thenthrough Himself, with the words: "Whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never thirst again' (John4:14).

49. The soul overcome by listlessness is manifestly also possessed by lack of faith. It is on account of this that itlets day after day go by without heeding the Gospels. Not paying attention to the inner

warfare, it is taken captive by conceit and frequently elated by dreams. Conceit blinds the soul, not letting it perceiveits own weakness.

50. As the new-bom child is the image of the fuU-grown man, so the soul is in a certain sense the image of Godwho created it. The child, on growing up, begins gradually to recognize its father, and when it reaches maturity, theydispose things mutually and equally, father with son and son with father, and the father's wealth is disclosed to theson. Something similar should have happened to the soul. Before the fall, the soul was to have progressed and so tohave attained full manhood (cf Eph. 4:13). But through the fall it was plunged into a sea of forgetfulness, into anabyss of delusion, and dwelt within the gates of hell. As if separated from God by a great distance, it could not drawnear to its Creator and recognize Him properly. But first through the prophets God called it back, and drew it toknowledge of Himself. Finally, through His own advent on earth. He dispelled the forgetfulness, the delusion; then,breaking through the gates of hell. He entered the deluded soul, giving Himself to it as a model. By means of thismodel the soul can grow to maturity and attain the perfection of the Spirit. It is therefore for our sakes that the Logosof God is by divine permission tempted by the devil, and then endures vilifications, mockeries, beatings at the handsof savage men, and finally death on the Cross, showing us, as we said, what attitude we must take up towards thosewho vilify and mock us and bring us to our death. Thus we become as though deaf and dumb before them, notopening our mouth, so that clearly perceiving the subtlety and energy of evil, and as though nailed to the cross, wemay call loudly to Him who can deliver us from death (cf. Heb. (5:7) and cleanse us from our secret faults (cf. Ps.19:12); for "if they do not have dominion over me, then 1 shall be faultless" (Ps. 19:13). When we are faultless wefind Him 'who has brought all things into subjection' (Ps. 8:6), and we reign and enjoy repose with Christ.Overpowered through the fall by material and unclean thoughts, the soul became as though witless. As a result, nosmall effort is needed for it to rise out of materiality and to grasp the subtlety of evil, so that it can commingle withunoriginate Intellect.

51. If you want to return to yourself and to recover your original glory, which you lost through your disobedience,heedlessly paying more attention to the orders and counsel of the devil than to the commandments of God, then youmust

now have done with him whom you obeyed and turn towards the Lord. But you must know that only

after much labor and sweat of the brow will you recover your richness. Nor is it to your advantage to attain thisblessed state without suffering and great effort, for if you do you will lose what you have received and betray yourinheritance to the enemy. Let us each realize, then, what we have lost and repeat the lamentation of the prophet:'Our inheritance is despoiled by strangers and our house by aliens' (Lam. 5:2), because we disobeyed thecommandment and surrendered ourselves to our own desires, delighting in sordid and worldly thoughts. Then oursoul was far away from God and we were like fatherless orphans. Thus, if we are concerned for our own soul wemust make every effort to purge away evil thoughts and 'all the self-esteem that exalts itself against the knowledge

of God' (2 Cor. 10:5). And when we have forcibly applied ourselves to keeping God's temple spotless, then He whopromised to make His dwelling in it will come to us. Then the soul recovers its inheritance and is privileged tobecome a temple of God. For, after thus Himself expelling the devil and his army, from henceforth He reigns withinus.

52. What the Creator outwardly said to Cain, that he would wander over the earth lamenting and trembling (cfGen. 4:12. LXX), is in its inner meaning a figure and image of all sinners. For the race of Adam, having broken thecommandment and become guilty of sin, is shaken by restless thoughts, full of fear, cowardice and turmoil. Everysoul not reborn in God is tossed hither and thither by the desires and multifarious pleasures of the enemy, andwhirled about like com in a sieve. To show that those who act in accordance with the desires of the devil bear inthemselves the image of Cain's iniquity, the Lord Himself said: 'You seek to carry out the desires of your father, themurderer. He was a murderer

from the first and is not rooted in the truth" (cf. John 8:44).

53. It is significant how deeply attracted men are by the spectacle of an earthly king and how eagerly they seekafter it; and how everyone who lives in a city where the king has his residence longs to catch a glimpse simply of theextravagance and ostentation of his entourage. Only under the influence of spiritual things will they disregard allthis and look down on it, wounded by another beauty and desiring a different kind of glory. If the sight of a mortalking is so important to worldly people, how much more desirable must the sight of the immortal king be to thoseinto whom some drops of the Holy Spirit have fallen and whose hearts have been smitten by divine love? For this

They will relinquish all amity with the world, so that they may keep that longing continually in their hearts,preferring nothing to it. But few indeed there are who add to a good beginning an equivalent end and who endurewithout stumbling until they reach it. Many are moved to repentance and many become partakers of heavenly graceand are wounded by divine love; but, unable to bear the ensuing tribulations and the wily and versatile assaults ofthe devil, they submit to the world and are submerged in its depths through the flabbmess and debility of their will,or are taken captive by some attachment to worldly things. Those who wish to pursue the way with assurance to theend will not permit any other longing or love to intermingle with their divine love.

54. Just as the blessings promised by god are unutterably great, so their acquisition requires much hardship andtoil undertaken with hope and faith. This is clear from Christ's words: 'if any man will come after me, let him denyhimself, take up his cross, and follow me' (matt. 16:24); and: 'he who does not hate father and mother, brothers andsisters, wife and children, and even his own soul, cannot be a disciple of mine' (Luke 14:26). Most people are solacking in intelligence as to want to attain the great and inconceivable blessing of the

kingdom of god, and to inherit

eternal life and reign for ever with Christ, while living according to their own desires - or rather, according to himwho sows within them these clearly noxious vanities.

55. Those who reach the goal without falling do so through hating themselves and all worldly desires,distractions, pleasures and preoccupations, for this is what 'denying oneself amounts to. Hence everyone expelshimself from the kingdom by his own choice, through not embracing suffering and denying himself for the sake ofthe truth, but wanting to enjoy something of this world in addition to that divine longing, and not surrendering thewhole inclination of his will to god. This may be understood from a single example. On examining himself a manrealizes that what he is so eager to do is wicked. At first he feels doubt about it in his heart. Next, the measure andbalance in his conscience make it clear inwardly whether the bias inclines to love for god or love for the world; andafter that he proceeds to outward action. If for instance someone happens to have fallen out with his brother, then heexamines himself, as we have said. At first he finds himself hesitant about whether to speak or not to speak, whetherto return the insults hurled at him or to keep silent. At this point the man still remembers god's commandments, buthe also thinks about his

own reputation and has not fully chosen to deny himself. If a bias in favor of the world tips his heart's balance evenslightly, an evil word will at once be on the tip of his tongue. When this happens, with the intellect stretchedinwardly like a bow he attacks his neighbor with his tongue and even with his hands - indeed, the evil can proceedso far that wounds result, or even murder. Thus it is possible to compare the starting-point of the slight movement inhis soul with the terrible consequences to which it led. In this way every sin and malpractice, whether adultery, theft,greed, self-esteem or anything else, occurs when the will of the

soul is beguiled and coaxed to evil by worldlydesires and pleasures of the flesh.

56. Even good actions are frequently carried out for the sake of empty glory, and on this account they will bejudged by God in the same way as theft, injustice and other major sins. 'God has scattered the bones of those whoseek to please men", it is said (Ps. 53:5. LXX). The devil, being wily, versatile, tortuous and inventive, seeks to gainour allegiance and service even through our good actions.

57. Whenever anyone loves something belonging to this world, it will burden his mind, dragging it down and notallowing it to rise up. In such people the weight, bias and balance of the will, that is, of the heart, are inclined towhat is evil. It is in this way that torment and trial afflict the whole human race, whether they are Christians living incities or on mountains, in monasteries, in the country or the desert. For if one is willingly enticed by what one lovesit is clear that one has not yet dedicated all one's love to God. Whether one likes possessions, or gold, or serving

one's stomach, or indulging in fleshly desires, or wordy wisdom designed to gain men's praise, or authority, orhonors from men, or anger and wrath, or useless speeches, or merely day-dreaming and listening to idle words, oracting as a teacher for the sake of men's esteem-in each and every case to give oneself to a passion is manifestly tolove it. One person surrenders himself to sluggishness and negligence, another delights in extravagant clothes,another in sleep, another in silly jokes: whatever the worldly thing, big or small, by which one is bound and heldfast, it prevents one from raising oneself up. Clearly, we indulge ourselves in whatever passion we do not resist andfight against bravely: like some shackle it binds us and drags us down, degrading the mind so that it does notdedicate itself to God and worship Him alone. The soul that truly directs its desire towards the

Lord focuses all its longing on Him, denying itself and not following the desires of its own intellect.

58. Example makes it clear that man is destroyed by his own free choice: for out of love for some worldly thing hethrows himself into fire, is drowned in the sea and gives himself into captivity. Let us suppose that someone's houseor field has caught fire. The person who wanted to save himself fled without anything as soon as he noticed the fire,leaving everything in it and concerned only with his own life. But someone else thought he would take some of thegoods with him, so he stayed behind to collect them; and as he was taking them the fire, which had alreadyoverwhelmed the house, caught him as well and burnt him. In this way, through his attachment to some transientthing, he was destroyed in the fire by his own free choice. Again, two men were shipwrecked. One of them, wantingto save himself, stripped off his clothes and threw himself into the water; and in this way he was able to save his life.The other, wanting to save his clothes as well, was drowned, destroying himself for the sake of a slight gain. Oragain, let us suppose that news of an attack by an enemy was announced. One man, as soon as he heard the news,fled as fast as his feet would carry him, without a thought for his possessions. Another, either because he distrustedthe news, or because he wanted to take with him some of his goods, waited until later, and when the enemy arrivedhe was caught. Thus, through his lack of alertness and his attachment to worldly things, he lost body and soul by hisown free choice.

59. Few are those who really acquire perfect love for God, looking upon all worldly pleasures and desires asnothing and patiently enduring the devil's trials. But one must not despair on this account, or give up hope. Even ifmany ships suffer shipwreck there are always those that come safely through to port. For this reason we need greatfaith, endurance, attentiveness, struggle, hunger and thirst for what is right, as well as great understanding anddiscrimination, together with clear-sightedness and lack of shame in making our requests. As we have said, mostmen want to attain the kingdom without toil and sweat; and although they praise the saints and desire their dignity

and gifts, they are not willing to share with them in the same afflictions, hardships and sufferings. Everyone -prostitutes, tax-collectors and everyone else - wants this. For this reason, trials and temptations are set before us, soas to make it clear who in truth loves their Lord and deserves to attain the kingdom of heaven.

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St Symeon Metaphrastis

Paraphrase of the Homihes

ofSt Makarios of Egypt

IIIPatient Endurance and Discrimination

60. In afflictions and sufferings, endurance and faith, are concealed the promised glory and the recovery ofcelestial blessings. Even the grain of com sown in the earth, or the graft on a tree, has to go through a kind ofputrefaction and, so to say, humiliation before it clothes itself in its full glory and produces a rich crop. But for thisputrefaction and, as it were, dishonoring, neither would attain its final glory and beauty. This is confirmed by theapostles when they say that to enter the kingdom of God we have to pass through many afflictions (cf. Acts 14:22).And the Lord Himself says: 'You will gain possession of your souls through your patient endurance' (Luke 21:19);and: "In the world you will experience affliction' (John 16:33).

61. If through faith and effort we are enabled to become partakers of the Holy Spirit, then to a correspondingdegree our bodies also will be glorified on the last day. For what is now treasured up within the soul will then berevealed outwardly in the body. Trees provide an illustration of this: once winter is past and the sun shines morebrightly and fully and the winds blow benignly, they put forth buds from within and clothe themselves in leaves,flowers and fruits. Similarly, in springtime flowering plants shoot up from the breast of the earth so that the groundis covered with them, wearing them as though they we're a beautiful dress; as Christ says: 'Even Solomon in all hisglory was not arrayed like one of these' (Matt. 6:29). All these are types and examples and images of the reward thatthe redeemed will receive at the resurrection; for to all devout souls - that is to say, to all true Christians - it is in thefirst month, which is April, that the power of the resurrection is revealed. In the words of Holy Scripture, 'Thismonth .. . will be to you the first among the months of the year' (Exod. 12:2). This month will clothe the naked treeswith the glory previously hidden within them. And so, too, will the bodies of the righteous be glorified through theineffable light - the power of the Spirit-that is already present within them; and this will be to them clothing, food,drink, exultation, joy, peace and, crowning all, life eternal.

IVThe Raising of the Intellect

62. Through the glory of the Spirit that shone from his face in such a way that no one could look at it (cf. Exod.54:30-31), Moses showed how in the resurrection of the righteous their bodies will be glorified with the glory thattheir souls already possess inwardly during this present life. For, as St Paul says, 'with unveiled face' - that is to say,inwardly - 'we reflect as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, and are transfigured into the same image from glory toglory' (2 Cor. 3:18). In this connection, too, it is said that Moses did not eat or drink for forty days and forty nights(cf. Exod. 34:28), something that human nature cannot accomplish unless nourished by spiritual food. Such is thefood that the souls of the saints already during this present life receive from the Spirit.

63. The glory that in the present life enriches the souls of the saints will cover and enfold their naked bodies at theresurrection and will carry them to heaven. Then with body and soul the saints will rest with God in the kingdom forever. For God, when He created Adam, did not give him bodily wings, as He gave to the birds: His purpose was toconfer the wings of the Spirit on him at the resurrection, so that he might be lifted up by them and carried whereverthe Spirit desired. Such spiritual wings are given to the souls of the saints in this present life, so that theirunderstanding may be raised by them to the spiritual realm. For the world of the Christians is a different world, withdifferent garments, different food and a different form of enjoyment. We know that when Christ comes from heavento resurrect all those who have died during the present age. He will divide them into two groups (cf. Matt. 25:31-33).Those who bear His sign, which is the seal of the Holy Spirit, He will set at His right hand, saying: "My sheep, whenthey hear My voice, recognize Me' (cf. John 10:14). Then He will envelop their bodies with the divine glory that,through their good works and the Spirit,

their souls have already received in the present life. Thus glorified by the divine light and caught up into the heavensto meet the Lord, they will always be with Him (cf. 1 Thess. 4:17-18).

64. Those who intend to fulfill the Christian way of life to the best of their ability must first devote all theirattention to the rational, discriminative and directing aspect of the soul. Per-fecting in this way their discriminationbetween good and evil, and defending the purity of their nature against the attacks of the passions that are contraryto nature, they go forward without stumbling, guided by the eye of discrimination and not embroiled with theimpulses of evil. For the soul's will is able to preserve the body free from the vitiation of the senses, to keep the soulaway from worldly distraction, and to guard the heart from scattering its thoughts into the world, completely walling

them in and holding them back from base concerns and pleasures. Whenever the Lord sees someone acting in thismanner, perfecting and guarding himself, disposed to serve Him with fear and trembling. He extends to him theassistance of His grace. But what will God do for the person who willingly gives himself up to the world andpursues its pleasures?

65. The five watchful virgins who bore in the vessels of their hearts the oil that was not inherent in their nature -for it is the grace of the Holy Spirit - were able to enter with the bridegroom into the bridal-chamber. But the otherfoolish and sinful virgins, who remained fixed in their own nature, did not practice watchfulness, nor did they thinkit important to receive this oil of joyfulness in their hearts, for they still walked according to the flesh. On thecontrary, in their negligence, slothfulness and self-righteousness, they were as though asleep, and for this reasonthey were shut out from the bridal-chamber of the kingdom (cf. Matt. 25:1-13). It is clear that they were held backby some kind of bond and amity with the world, inasmuch as they could not offer all their love and longing to thecelestial bridegroom. For souls aspiring to acquire the sanctifying power of the Spirit that is not intrinsic to humannature direct all their love towards Christ: they walk, pray, think and meditate in Christ, and they turn away fromeverything

else. And if the soul's five senses -understanding, spiritual knowledge, discrimination, patient enduranceand compassion - receive the grace and sanctification of the Spirit, they will in truth be wise virgins; but if they areleft imprisoned in their own nature then they are indeed foolish virgin-children of the world and subject to the wrathof God.

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St Symeon Metaphrastis

Paraphrase of the HomiHes

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IVThe Raising of the Intellect

66. Evil is foreign to our nature; but, given admittance by us through the transgression of the first man, it has withtime become as though natural to us. Yet through the celestial gift of the Spirit, that is also foreign to our nature, thisnature can once more be completely purged of evil and we can be restored to our original purity. But unless thiscomes about as the result of great supplication, faith and attentiveness, and by our turning away from the things ofthe world; and unless our nature, denied as it is by evil, is sanctified by the love that is the Lord, and we continueunfailingly to apply ourselves to His divine commandments, we cannot attain the kingdom of Heaven.

67. I wish to elucidate, so far as I can, a subject that is as subtle as it is profound. The infinite and bodiless Lord,who is beyond being, in His infinite bounty embodies and, so to say, reduces Himself so that He can comminglewith the intelligible beings that He has created-with, that is, the souls of saints and of angels - thereby making itpossible for them to participate in the immortal life of His own divinity. Now each thing - whether angel, soul ordemon - is, in conformity with its own nature, a body. No matter how subtle it may be, each thing possesses a bodywhose subtlety in substance, form and image corresponds to the subtlety of its own nature. In the case of humanbeings the soul, which is a subtle body, has enveloped and clothed itself in the members of our visible body, which

is gross in substance. It has clothed itself in the eye, through which it sees; in the ear, through which it hears; in thehand, the nose. In short, the soul has clothed

itself in the whole visible body and all its members, becomingcommingled with them, and through them accomplishing everything it does in this life. In the same way, in Hisunutterable and inconceivable bounty Christ reduces and embodies Himself, commingling with and embracing thesoul that aspires to Him with faith and love and, as St Paul puts it (cf 1 Cor. 6:17), becoming one spirit with it. Hissoul united with our soul and His Person with our person. Thus such a soul lives and has its being in His divinity,attaining immortal life and delighting in incorruptible pleasure and inexpressible glory.

68. In a soul of this kind the Lord when He wills is fire, consuming every sinful and alien thing in it, inaccordance with the words, "Our God is a consuming fire' (Deut. 4:24); at other times He is repose, wondrous andindescribable; or else joy and peace, cherishing and embracing it. Only it must aspire to Him with love and devoteItself

to holy ways of life, and then through direct experience, with its own perception, it will see itself partaking ofunutterable blessings that "the eye has not seen, and the ear has not heard, and man's heart has not grasped' (1 Cor.2:9). For to the soul that proves itself worthy of Him the Spirit of the Lord is now repose, now intense joy, nowdelight and life. Just as He embodies Himself in spiritual food, so He embodies Himself in indescribable raiment andbeauty, so that He fills the soul with spiritual gladness. As He Himself said: 'I am the bread of life' (John 6:35); and:'If anyone drinks of the water that I give him ... it will be in him a spring of water welling up for eternal life' (John4:14).

69. Hence God was seen by each priest and saint as He willed and as was most profitable to the beholder. Thus Hewas seen in one way by Abraham, in another by Isaac, in another by Jacob, in another by Noah, by Daniel, byMoses, by David and by each of the prophets. He reduced and embodied Himself, giving Himself a different formand appearing to those who loved Him, not as He is in

Himself-for He is beyond man's grasp - but according to theircapacity and strength; and He did this because of the great, incomprehensible love that He had for them.

70. The soul found worthy to be the dwelling-place of supernal power, and whose members are commingled withthat divine fire and with the celestial love of the Holy Spirit, is set free completely from all worldly love. Iron orlead, or gold and silver, melts when put into fire, and its natural solidity is softened, so that it is malleable and pliantso long as it is in the fire. Similarly, once the soul has received the celestial fire of the love of the Spirit, it renouncesevery attachment to the spirit of this world, breaks free from the bonds of evil, loses the natural obduracy of sin, andregards all worldly things as of no account. So much is this the case that should a soul, conquered by such love, findthat certain brothers who are very dear to it impede its dedication to that love, then it will withdraw its affectionfrom them. Nuptial love separates one from the love of father and mother, sister and brother, and any love one may

bear them will be slight, since one's whole heart and desire are directed towards one's spouse. If earthly lovedissolves all other worldly affection in this way, those wounded by that dispassionate longing will not be held backin the least by the love of anything worldly.

71. Being bountiful and full of love. God awaits with great patience the repentance of every sinner, and Hecelebrates the return of the sinner with celestial rejoicing; as He Himself says, 'There is joy in

heaven over one sinner who repents' (cf. Luke 15:7,10). But when someone sees this generosity and patience, andhow God awaits repentance and so does not punish sins one by one, he may neglect the commandment and makesuch generosity an excuse for indifference, adding sin to sin, offence to offence,

laziness to laziness. In this way hewill reach the furthest limits of sin, and fall into such transgression that he is not able to recover himself. On thecontrary, sinking into the lowest depths and finally committing himself to the devil, he destroys himself. That iswhat happened to the people of Sodom: reaching and even going beyond the furthest limits of sin - for not a singlespark of repentance was to be found among them - they were consumed by the fire of divine justice (cf Gen. 19:1-28). It also happened in the time of Noah: people had surrendered so unrestrainedly to the impulses to evil, piling upsuch a load of sin on themselves and showing not the least sign of repentance, that the whole earth became corrupt(cf. Gen. 6:5). Similarly, God was bountiful to the Egyptians, although they had sinned greatly and had maltreatedHis people: He did not hand them over to total destruction, but through gradual chastisement He induced them torepent. Yet when they lapsed and returned enthusiastically to their evil ways and to their original disbelief, finallyeven pursuing the Lord's people as they departed from Egypt, divine justice destroyed them completely (cf. Exod.14:23-28). God also showed His habitual forbearance towards the people of Israel, although they too had sinnedgreatly and had killed His prophets. Yet when they became so committed to evil that they did not respect even theroyal dignity of His Son, but laid murderous hands upon Him, they were utterly rejected and cast aside: prophecy,priesthood and service were taken from them and were entrusted to the Gentiles who believed (cf. Matt. 21:33-43).

72. Let us draw near eagerly to Christ who summons us, surrendering our hearts to Him, and let us not despair ofour salvation, deliberately giving ourselves over to evil. For it is a trick of the devil to lead us to despair byreminding us of our past sins. We must realize that if Christ when on earth healed and restored the blind, theparalyzed and the dumb, and raised the dead that were already in a state of decomposition, how much more will Heheal blindness of mind, paralysis of soul, and dumbness of the dissolute heart. For He who created the body alsocreated the soul. And if He

was so bounteous and merciful to what is mortal and disintegrates, how much more compassionate and healing willHe not be to the immortal soul, overpowered by the sickness of evil and ignorance, when it turns to Him and asksHim for help? For it is He who said: "Will not My heavenly Father vindicate those who call to Him night and day?Yes, I assure you. He will vindicate them swiftly' (cf. Luke 18:7-8); and: 'Ask and it will be given to you, seek; andyou will find, knock and it will be opened to you" (Matt. 7:7); and again: 'If he will not give to him out offriendship, yet on account of his persistence he will get up and give him what he needs' (cf. Luke 11:8). Moreover,He came so that sinners should turn back to Him (cf. Matt. 9:13). Only let us devote ourselves to the Lord, rejectingin so far as we can our evil prepossessions; and He will not overlook us, but will be ready to offer us His help.

73. When a person is so sick and weak that his body cannot accept food and drink, he is reduced to despair andbecomes a living image of death, and his friends and relatives mourn over him. Similarly, God and the angels mournand are full of sorrow for souls incapable of absorbing celestial nourishment. But if you become God's throne andHe Himself takes His seat on it; if your whole soul is a spiritual eye, all light; if you nourish yourself on thesustenance of the Spirit and drink living water and the spiritual wine that rejoices the heart (cf. Ps. 104:15); if youclothe your soul in ineffable light - if inwardly you attain experience and full assurance of all these things, then youwill live the truly eternal life, reposing in Christ while still in this present world. If you have not yet attained thisstate or have not started to acquire it, you should weep bitterly and lament because you still do not as yet possesssuch riches; and you should constantly be mindful of your poverty and should pray because of it. But even the manwho has attained this state should still be aware of his dearth lest, as though sated with divine riches, he becomesnegligent. As the Lord says, he who seeks will find and to him who knocks it will be opened (cf. Matt. 7:8).

74. If the oil formed from different spices (cf. Exod. 30:23-25) had such power that those anointed with it attaineda royal status (cf. 1 Sam. 10:1; 16:13), will not those whose intellect and inner being are anointed with thesanctifying oil of gladness (cf. Ps. 45:7), and who have received the pledge of the Holy Spirit, even more surelyattain the realm of perfection - that is to say, Christ's kingdom and

adoption by Him - and become the King's companions, entering and leaving the Father's presence as they wish?Even if they have not yet entered totally into their inheritance, being still burdened with the weight of the flesh, yetthrough the pledge of the Spirit they will be fully assured of the things for which they hope, and will not have anydoubt that they will reign with Christ and will enjoy the supra-abundant fullness of the Spirit: though still clothed inthe flesh, they have had direct experience of that power and that pleasure. For grace, once it has been conferred as aresult of the purification of the intellect and the inner being, completely removes the veil in which man was wrappedby Satan after the fall, expelling every defilement and every sordid thought from the soul. Its aim is to cleanse thesoul, so enabling it to recover its original nature and to contemplate the glory of the true light with clear, unimpededeyes. Once this is achieved, man is here and now raised to the eternal world and perceives its beauty and its wonder.Just as the physical eye, as long as it is sound and healthy, gazes confidently at the sun's rays, so such a man, hisintellect illumined and purified, always contemplates the never-setting light of the Lord.

75. It is not easy for men to reach this level. It requires much toil, struggle and suffering. In many, although graceis active, evil is still present together with it, lying hidden: the two spirits, that of light and that of darkness, are atwork in the same heart. Naturally, you will ask what communion light can have with darkness, or what concord canGod's temple have with idols (cf 2 Cor. 6:14,16). I will answer you with the same words: what communion canlight have with darkness? Pure and unsullied as it is, in what way is the divine light darkened, obscured or sullied?The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not grasp it" (John 1:5). Thus things must not be interpreted inisolation or in a single way. Some repose in God's grace only for as long as they can keep a hold over themselvesand can avoid being vanquished by the sinfulness dwelling within them: for a time they can pray diligently and areat rest, but then unclean

thoughts become active within them and they are taken captive by sin, which in their caseclearly coexists with grace. Those who are superficial, and who have not yet grasped the precise degree to whichdivine energy is active in them, think they have been delivered once and for all from sin; but those who areintelligent and possess discrimination would not deny that, though God's grace dwells

within them, they may also be harassed by shameful and unnatural thoughts.

76. We have often known brethren who have enjoyed such richness of grace that all sinful desire has completelydried up and been extinguished in them for five or six years. Then, just when they thought they had reached a haven

and found peace, evil has leapt upon them as though from an ambush so savagely and with such hostility that theyhave been thrown into confusion and doubt. No one, therefore, who possesses understanding would dare to say thatonce grace dwells in him he is thereafter free from sin. As we said, both grace and sin may be active in the sameintellect, even if the gullible and ignorant, after having had some slight spiritual experience, claim that they havealready won the battle. This, in my opinion, is how things are: dark air or mist suddenly rising may obscure the sun'slight even when it is shining brightly; in a similar manner those who, although enjoying God's grace, have not yetbeen completely purified and in their depths are still under the sway of sin, may also be suddenly overcome bydarkness. Truly, it needs great discrimination to perceive these things in one's actual experience in a foolproof way.

77. Just as it is impossible for a person without eyes, tongue, ears and feet, to see, talk, hear or walk, so also it isimpossible to commune in the divine mysteries, know God's wisdom or be enriched by the Spirit, without God'shelp and the energy He gives. The Greek sages were trained in the use of words and engaged spiritedly in verbalbattles. The servants of God, even if they lack skill

in argument, are familiar in every way with divine knowledgeand God's grace.

78. I am convinced that not even the apostles, although filled with the Holy Spirit, were therefore completely freefrom anxiety. In addition to exultation and inexpressible joy they also felt a certain fear, prompted, to be sure, notfrom the side of evil but by grace itself; for grace was so securely established within them that they could not in factdeviate at all from the right path. And just as a child by throwing a small pebble does no real harm to a wall, or as afeeble arrow can damage a strong breastplate only very slightly, so even if some evil thing assailed them, the attackproved to be utterly ineffectual and vain, since they were well protected by the power of Christ. Yet even thoughthey were perfect they still possessed their free will; contrary to the stupid view expressed by some, the advent

of grace does not mean immediate deliverance from anxiety. The Lord asks even from the perfect that the soul's willshould serve the Spirit, so that the two come together. "Do not quench the Spirit", says St Paul (1 Thess. 5:19).

79. To explain things in superficial terms is not difficult or troublesome. For example, it is easy for anyone to saythat this loaf is made from wheat; yet to expound stage by stage how bread is made lies within the competence notof everyone but only of those with experience. Similarly, it is easy to speak superficially about dispassion andperfection; but the stages by which they are achieved can be truly understood only by those who have attained themin their actual experience.

80. Those who hold forth about spiritual realities without having tasted and experienced them are like a mantraversing an empty and arid plain at high noon on a summer's day: in his great and burning thirst he imagines that

there is a cool spring close at hand, full of sweet clear water, and that there is nothing to prevent him from drinkingit to his heart's content. Or they are like a man who, without having tasted a drop of honey, tries to explain to otherswhat its sweetness is like. Such indeed are those who try to introduce others to perfection, sanctity and dispassionwithout having learnt about these things through their own efforts and direct experience. And had God given themeven a slight awareness of the things about which they speak, they would at all events see that the truth about themdiffers greatly from the explanation that they give. Christianity is liable to be misconstrued little by little in this way,and so turned into atheism. But in reality Christianity is like food and drink: the more a man tastes it, the more helongs for it, until his intellect becomes insatiable and uncontrollable. It is as if one were to offer to a thirsty person asweet drink such that he would want, not simply to slake his thirst, but to go on drinking more and more because ofthe pleasure it gave him. These things are not to be understood merely in a theoretical way; they must be achievedwithin the intellect in a mysterious manner through the activity of the Holy Spirit, and only then can they be spokenabout.

81. The Gospel commands everyone categorically to do this or not to do that, thus enabling us to become friendsof the loving King. "Do not be angry", it says (cf Matt. 5:22), and, "Do not lust' (cf Matt. 5:28); and, 'If someonestrikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other cheek as well' (Matt. 5:39). St Paul, following closely in

the steps of these commandments, teaches how the actual work of purification should take place stage by stage,patiently and with long-suffering: first he nourishes the unmstructed with milk (cf 1 Cor. 3:1-2), next he bringsthem to maturity (cf Eph. 4:14-15), and then to perfection (cf. Heb. 5:12-14). In this way the Gospel forms as itwere a complete woolen garment, while St Paul explains clearly how the wool for this garment is to be carded,woven and made up.

82. There are some who have desisted from outward unchastity, fraud, greed and similar iniquity and who on thisaccount regard themselves as saints, when in fact they are far from being true saints. For evil frequently dwells inthe intellects of such people, thriving there and creeping around; and after it has destroyed them it leaves them andgoes on its way. The saint is he who is sanctified and totally purified in his inner being. One of the brethren waspraying with others when he was seized and taken captive by the divine power, and he saw the heavenly Jerusalemand the resplendent dwelling-places there and the boundless and ineffable light. Then he heard a voice saying thatthis was the place of repose for the righteous. After this, he became very conceited and full of presumption, and felldeeply into sin and was overcome by many evils. If such a man fell, how can anyone say that because he fasts, livesin voluntary exile, gives away all his property and desists from all outward sins, there is nothing wanting for him tobe a saint? For pertection consists not in abstention from outward sins but in the total cleansing of the mind.

83. Understanding these things, enter within yourself by keeping watch over your thoughts, and scrutinize closelyyour intellect, captive and slave to sin as it is. Then discover, still more deeply within you than this, the serpent thatnestles in the inner chambers of your soul and destroys you by attacking the most sensitive aspects of your soul. Fortruly the heart is an immeasurable abyss. If you have destroyed that serpent, have cleansed yourself of all innerlawlessness, and have expelled sin, you may boast in God of your purity; but if not, you should humble yourselfbecause you are still a sinner and in need, and ask Christ to come to you on account of your secret sins. The wholeOld and New Testament speaks of purity, and everyone, whether Jew or Greek, should long for purity even thoughnot all can attain it. Purity of heart can be brought about only by Jesus; for He is authentic and absolute Truth, andwithout this Trath it is impossible to know the truth or to achieve salvation.

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V

Love

84. Having outwardly renounced visible things and given away your goods, you must in the same way alsorenounce your inner prepossessions and attitudes. If you have acquired worldly wisdom or material knowledge, youmust reject it. If you have put your trust in earthly privileges, give them up, humbling and belittling yourself. In thisway you can discover what St Paul meant by the 'folly' of the Gospel; for in this folly you will find true wisdom,which resides not in fine words but in the power of the Cross that is active as an actual reality in those found worthyto achieve such wisdom. As St Paul says, Christ's Cross is "a stumbling-block to the Jews and folly to the Greeks,but to those who are saved it is God's power and wisdom' (cf 1 Cor. 1:21-24).

85. Even if you have tasted things celestial and partaken of divine wisdom, and your soul is at rest, do not exaltyourself or grow overconfident, thinking that you have already reached your goal and understand all truth, lest StPaul's words also apply to you: "You are sated already, you are already rich, you have reigned as kings without us.Would that you did reign, so that we could reign with you' (1 Cor. 4:8). Even if you have been given some taste,regard yourself as still not yet a Christian; and do not just think this superficially, but let it be as though planted andestablished permanently in your mind.

86. A lover of riches is never satisfied, no matter how many possessions he accumulates, but the more he acquiresdaily, the more his appetite increases; and a person forcibly pulled away from a stream of pure water before he hasquenched his thirst feels even more thirsty. In a similar way, once one has experienced the taste of God, one cannever be satisfied or have enough of it, but however much one is enriched by this wealth one still feels oneself to bepoor. Christians do not set great store by their own lives, but regard themselves rather as rightly set at nought byGod and as everyone's

servants. God rejoices greatly at this, and takes His repose in the soul because of its humility. If therefore you attainsomething or are enriched, do not on this account presume you are something or have something. Presumption is anabomination to the Lord, and it was this that originally expelled man from paradise when he heard the serpent say,'You will be like gods' (Gen. 3:5), and put his trust in this vain hope. Have you not learnt how your God and King,and the very Son of God, emptied Himself and took on the form of a slave (cf Phil. 2:7)? How He became poor,was ranked among criminals, and suffered? If this is what happened to God, do you think that man. formed of fleshand blood, who is but earth and ashes, totally without goodness and wholly depraved, has reason to be proud andboastful? If you have understanding you will recognize that even what you have received from God is not yourown, since you were given it by another; and should He think fit, it will certainly be taken away from you again.Attribute, therefore, every blessing to God and every evil to your own weakness.

87. That treasure which St Paul said we hold in pots of clay (cf. 2 Cor. 4:7) is the sanctifying power of the Spiritwhich while still in the flesh he was enabled to receive. Again St Paul says:'... who has been made by God ourwisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption' (1 Cor. 1:30). He who finds and possesses this supernaltreasure of the Spirit can accomplish all righteous acts and works prescribed by the commandments, not only inpurity and faultlessly, but also without any suffering or exertion, whereas before he was far from accomplishingthem in such a painless way. For no one, however he tries, can truly cultivate spiritual fruits before participating inthe Holy Spirit But everyone should put pressure on himself, striving to advance with endurance and faith, andfervently beseeching Christ that he may acquire this heavenly treasure; for in it and through it he can accomplish, aswas said, every righteous act in purity and perfectly, without toil or distress.

88. Whenever those who possess in themselves the divine riches of the Spirit take part in spiritual discussion, theydraw as it were on their inner treasure-house and share their wealth with their hearers. Those, however, who do nothave stored in the sanctuary of their heart the treasure from which springs forth the bounty of divine thoughts,mysteries and inspired words, but who cull what they say from the Scriptures, speak merely from the tip of thetongue; or if

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V

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they have listened to spiritual men, they preen themselves with what others have said, putting it forward as though itwere their own and claiming interest on someone else's capital. Their listeners can enjoy what they say without greateffort, but they themselves, when they have finished speaking, prove to be like paupers. For they have simplyrepeated what they have taken from others, without acquiring treasures of their own from which they could firstderive pleasure themselves and which they could then communicate profitably to others. For this reason we mustfirst ask God that these true riches may dwell within us, and then we can readily benefit others and speak to them ofspiritual matters and divine mysteries. For God's goodness delights to dwell in every believer. As Christ said: 'Hewho loves Me will be loved by My Father; and I will love him and disclose Myself to him' (John 14:21); and again:'I and My Father will come to him, and take up Our abode with him' (John 14:23).

89. Those who are privileged to become children of God and to have Christ shining forth within them are guidedby varied and differing qualities of the Spirit, and are cherished by grace in the secret places of the heart. Theseeming joys of the world arc not to be compared with the experience of divine grace in the soul. Those who sharein this grace are sometimes filled with an inexpressible and nameless joy and exultation, as if they were at someroyal banquet; sometimes they feel like bride and bridegroom delighting together spiritually; and sometimes likebodiless angels, since the body has become so weightless and light that it seems that they are not clothed with it.Sometimes it seems that they are in some realm greatly rejoicing and drunk with the inexpressible drunkenness ofthe mysteries of the Spirit; and then at other times they are full of grief, weeping and lamenting as they intercede forman's salvation. For, burning with the divine love of the Spirit for all men, they take into themselves the grief of allAdam; and sometimes they are kindled by the Spirit with such untold love and delight that, were it at all possible,they would clasp everyone to their breast,

not making any distinction between who is good and who is bad; andsometimes they so disparage themselves that they regard themselves as the least of all men. Now they are consumedwith unutterable spiritual joy; and now, like some mighty warrior donning royal armor, marching to war and puttingthe enemy to flight, they arm themselves with the weapons of the Spirit, attack their invisible enemies and treadthem

underfoot. Now they are embraced by great tranquility and stillness, peace nourishes them and they experience great

delight; and now they acquire understanding, divine wisdom and unsearchable spiritual knowledge. In short, it isimpossible to describe the grace of Christ by which they are illumined. At other times they can appear to be like anyordinary person. Divine grace, taking in them many different forms, teaches and disciplines the soul so as to presentit perfect, pure and spotless to the heavenly Father.

90. All these workings of the Spirit are characteristic of those at a high level and very close to perfection. Forthese manifold blessings of grace are variously but unceasingly made active in such people by the Spirit, onespiritual energy succeeding another. When the soul attains spiritual perfection, totally purged of all the passions andwholly united and commingled with the Holy Spirit, the Intercessor, in ineffable communion, then through thiscommingling with the Spirit the soul is itself enabled to become spirit: it becomes all light, all spirit, all joy, repose,exultation, all love, all tenderness, all goodness and kindness. It is as though it had been swallowed up in the virtuesbelonging to the power of the Holy Spirit as a stone in the depths of the sea is surrounded by water. Totally united inthis way to the Holy Spirit, such people are assimilated to Christ

Himself, maintaining the virtues of the Spiritimmutable in themselves and revealing their fruits to all. Since through the Spirit they have been made inwardlyspotless and pure in heart, it is impossible for them to produce outwardly the fruits of evil: always and through allthings the fruits of the Spirit will be manifest in them. Such is the state of spiritual perfection, such the fullness ofChrist that St Paul exhorts us to attain when he says: "... so that you may be filled with the whole fullness of Christ'(cf. Eph. 3:19); and again: "... until we all attain to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness ofChrist'(Eph. 4:13).

91. There are times when, simply after kneeling down, we find our heart filled with divine energy and our souldelights in the Lord as a bride with the bridegroom: in Isaiah's words, 'As the bridegroom delights in the bride, sowill the Lord delight in you' (Isa. 62:5. LXX). A man may be occupied throughout the day, and devote himself forbut a single hour to prayer, and still be carried away inwardly by it, entering into the infinite depths of the otherworld. He experiences then an ineffable and measureless delight; his intellect, wholly suspended and ravished, isoverwhelmed, and during the time

he is in this state he is mindless of every worldly concern. For his thoughts are filled, as we said, with numberlessincomprehensible realities and are taken captive by them. In that hour his soul through prayer becomes one with hisprayer and is carried away with it.

92. If it is asked whether it is possible for such a person always to be in this state, it should be said that he is neverwithout grace; it is rooted and established in him as though it were part of his nature. Although single, it adapts itselfin many ways, according to what is most profitable for him. Sometimes its fire

bums in him strongly, sometimes

faintly; and its light sometimes shines brightly and sometimes diminishes and wanes, always as God wills, eventhough the lamp itself bums inextinguishably. When it shines more vividly, then the man himself appears even moreintoxicated with God's love. Sometimes the fire that bums unceasingly in the heart manifests itself with a moreinward and deeper light, so that the whole man, swallowed up by this sweetness and vision, is no longer in himself,but seems to the world like an uncouth fool because of the overpowering love and delight that floods his soul, andbecause of the deep mysteries which he has been privileged to share. It often happens at such a time that he attainsthe measure of perfection and is free and secure from all sinfulness. Afterwards, grace contracts in a certain manner,and the veil of the contrary power spreads itself over him.

93. Grace operates in the following way. Suppose that a person attains perfection on ascending to the twelfth step.You reach this level and remain there for a time; but grace again withdraws, so you go down one step, and stand onthe eleventh. The wonders of the higher step have been revealed to you, and you have had experience of them. But ifyou had remained on that step for ever, it would not have been possible for you to submit to the charge and burdenof teaching; you would not have been able to hear or speak anything, or to concern yourself with the least thing, butcould only have lain in some comer, enraptured and intoxicated. You were not allowed to remain on that final stepso that you would have time to devote to the care and instruction of the brethren.

94. If on hearing about the kingdom of heaven we are brought to tears, do not let us be content with these tears, orthink that we hear well with our ears or see well with our eyes, and that we need nothing further. For there are otherears, other eyes, other tears, just as there is another mind and another soul. I am referring to the divine

and heavenly Spirit, that hears and weeps, prays and knows, and that truly carries out God's will. When the Lordpromised the great gift of the Spirit to the apostles. He said: 'I am going; but the Intercessor, the Holy Spirit whomthe Father will send in My name, will teach you everything' (John 14:26); and: 'I still have much to tell you, but itsburden is more than you can bear now. When, however. He who is the Spirit of truth comes. He will guide you intoall the truth' (John 16:12-13). He, therefore, will pray, and He will weep. For, as St Paul says, 'we do not know whatto pray for as we should; but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with cries that cannot be uttered' (Rom.8:26). God's will is clear only to the Spirit. Again, as St Paul says: 'No one but the Spirit of God knows about thethings of God' (1 Cor. 2:11). When, as promised, on the day of Pentecost the Paraclete made Himself present and thepower of the Holy Spirit came to dwell in the souls of the apostles, the veil of sinfulness was once and for allremoved from them, their passions were annulled and the eyes of their heart were opened. Henceforth they werefilled with wisdom and made perfect by the Spirit: through Him they knew how to carry out God's will, and throughHim they were initiated into all truth, for He directed and reigned in their souls. Thus, when we are brought to tears

on hearing God's word, let us entreat Christ with unwavering faith and in the expectation that the Spirit, who trulyhears and prays according to God's will and purpose, will indeed come to us.

95. There is a certain cloud-like power, fine as air, that lightly covers the intellect; and even though the lamp ofgrace always bums and shines in a man, as we said, yet this power covers its light like a veil in such a way that he isforced to confess that he is not perfect or wholly free from sin, but is, so to speak, both free and not free. This,certainly, does not happen without God's assent but is, on the contrary, in accordance with divine providence.Sometimes the dividing wall (cf. Eph. 2:14) is loosened and shattered, sometimes it is not entirely broken down. Noris prayer always equally effective: sometimes grace is kindled more brightly, confers greater blessings, and refreshesmore fully, and sometimes it is duller and less strong, as grace itself ordains according to what is of most profit tothe person concerned. At certain times I have attained the level of perfection and have tasted and experienced theage to be; but never yet have I known any Christian who is perfect or absolutely free. Even if one

finds refreshment in grace and is enabled to share in mysteries and revelations, and experiences the great sweetnessof grace, sin still dwells within one. Those who because of surpassing grace and the light that shines within themthink that they are perfect and free do so from lack of experience. As 1 have said, I have never yet encounteredanyone who was absolutely free; but, having at certain times partially attained that level of which I have spoken, Iknow from experience what the perfected man is.

96. Whenever you hear about the communion of bridegroom and bride, about dancing, music and feasting, do nottake these things in a material or worldly manner: they are spoken of simply by way of illustration, as acondescension to our understanding. For the things they denote are spiritual and inexpressible, indiscernible tocorporeal eyes, and these illustrations help holy and faithful souls to perceive what is meant. The communion itselfof the Holy Spirit, celestial treasures, the dances and festivals of the angels-these things are clear only to those whohave experience of them; to the uninitiated they are totally beyond comprehension. Thus you must listen withreverence to what is said about them, until through faith you are enabled to attain them; then you will know, with theactual experience of the soul's eyes, in what blessings and mysteries the souls of Christians can share even duringthis present life. When in the resurrection their body becomes spiritual, it too is enabled to attain, behold and, so tospeak, grasp these things.

97. When our soul's own intrinsic qualities and fruits-prayer, love, faith, vigilance, fasting and the otherexpressions of the virtues-mingle and commune in the fellowship of the Spirit, they effuse a rich perfume, likeburning incense. At the same time it then becomes easy for us to live in accordance with God's will, whereas withoutthe Holy Spirit this is impossible, as we have already said.

Before a woman is married she acts in accordance with

her own will and desires; but once married she lives under the direction of her husband, abandoning her self-will.Similarly the soul has its own will, and its own laws and activities; but when it becomes worthy of uniting withChrist the heavenly bridegroom, it submits to His law and is obedient no longer to its own will but to that of Christ.

98. The wedding garment about which Christ speaks (cf. Matt. 22:11-12) signifies the grace of the Holy Spirit:the man who is not

worthy of wearing it has no part in the celestial marriage and in the spiritual wedding-feast.

99. We should eagerly drink spiritual wine and become drunk with a sober-minded drunkenness so that, just asthose glutted with ordinary wine become more talkative, we too, brim-full with this spiritual wine, may speak of thedivine mysteries. Thy cup has made me drunk as with the strongest wine', says the psalmist (Ps. 23:5. LXX).

100. The soul that is 'poor in spirit' (Matt. 5:3) is aware of its own wounds, perceives the encompassing darknessof the passions, and always calls upon the Lord for deliverance. It endures suffering, and does not delight in any ofthe good things of this world, but seeks out only the good doctor and entrusts itself to His treatment. How can thewounded soul become fair and seemly, and fit to live with Christ, except by truly recognizing its wounds andpoverty and by recovering the state in which it was originally created? If it does not take pleasure in the wounds andweals of the passions, or defend its faults, the Lord will not call it to

account for these things, but will come and healit, restoring its dispassion and its incorruptible beauty. Only it must not deliberately associate with past acts ofpassion or give its consent to the passions that are still active within it; but with all its strength it must call upon theLord, so that through His Holy Spirit it may be granted liberation from all the passions. Such is the soul that is calledblessed; but alas for the soul that is unaware of its wounds and that in its endless sinfulness and obduracy does notthink that it has anything evil within it: the good doctor will not visit it or heal it, since it does not seek Him out orhave any concern for its wounds, because it thinks it is well and in good health. As the Lord said: 'It is not thehealthy that need a doctor, but the sick' (Matt. 9:12).

101. Truly blessed and zealous for life and for surpassing joy are those who through fervent faith and virtuousconduct receive consciously and expenentially the knowledge of the celestial mysteries of the Spirit and whosecitizenship is in heaven (cf Phil. 3:20). Clearly they excel all other men; for who among the powerful or the wise orthe prudent could ascend to heaven while still on earth, and perform spiritual works there and have sight of thebeauty of the Spirit'? Such a person may appear poor, utterly poor, may be regarded as nothing and be totallyunrecognized by his neighbors; but falling on his face before the Lord he rises to heaven under the guidance of

the Spirit and with assurance of soul, dehghting in his mind with its wonders, occupying himseh'' there, hving there,having his citizenship there, as St Paul puts it. For he says: 'Our citizenship is in heaven' (Phil. 3:20); and he alsosays: 'The eye has not seen, and the ear has not heard, and man's heart has not grasped the things that God hasprepared for those who love Him. But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit' (1 Cor. 2:9-10). These are thetruly wise and powerful, these are the noble and the prudent.

102. Even apart from these celestial gifts distinguishing the saints from other living people, there are further waysof recognizing their superiority. For instance, Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, summoned to him all the peoplesto worship the image that he had set up (cf Dan. 3:1-30). But God in His wisdom so disposed things that the virtueof three children should be made known to everyone and should teach everyone that there is one true God, whodwells in the heavens. Three children, captive and deprived of their liberty, spoke out boldly before him; and whileeveryone else, in great fear, worshipped the image, and even if not convinced did not dare to say anything, but wasvirtually speechless, like beasts dragged along by the nose, these children behaved very differently. They did notwant their refusal to worship the image to go unrecognized or to escape notice, but they declared in the hearing ofall: 'We do not worship your gods, 0 king, nor will we bow down before the golden image that you have set up.' Yetthe terrible furnace into which they were cast as punishment was not a furnace for them and did not manifest itsnormal function; but as if reverencing the children it kept them free from harm. And everyone, including the kinghimself, through them recognized the true God. Not only those on earth, but the angelic choirs themselves wereamazed at these children. For the angels are not absent when the saints perform their acts of courage, but keep themcompany, as St Paul confirms when he says: 'We have become a spectacle... to angels and men' (1 Cor. 4:9).Another example of how saints are to be distinguished is that of Elijah who, though but a single man, prevailed overa great number of false prophets when the fire came down from heaven (cf. 1 Kgs. 18:38). And Moses prevailedover all Egypt and Pharaoh the tyrant (cf. Exod. chs. 5-13). Similarly Lot (cf. Gen. ch. 19) and Noah (cf. Gen. chs.6-7) and many others, despite their apparent weakness, overcame many powerful and notable people.

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103. Unless something of a different nature comes to its help, every phenomenon

retains its inherent imperfectionand deficiency. Thus God's inexpressible wisdom has shown forth in symbols and images through visible things thathuman nature in itself cannot manifest the full glory of the virtues and the spiritual beauty of holiness unless it hasthe assistance of God's helping hand. If the earth abides by itself, not receiving the farmer's attention and theassistance of rain and sun, it is unfit and incapable of bearing fruit; and every house would be filled with darknessbut for the light of the sun, which is not of its own nature; and other things are in a similar state. In the same way,human nature, which in itself is powerless to produce the fruits of the virtues in their full perfection, needs thespiritual husbandman of our souls; in other words, it needs the Spirit of Christ, and this Spirit is of a totally differentnature from our own, for we are created while He is uncreated. Skillfully tilling the hearts of the faithful so that theysurrender their whole will to Him, He enables them to produce perfect spiritual fruits, while He makes His lightshine in the soul's dwelling-place that has been darkened by the passions.

104. The warfare and struggle in which Christians are engaged is twofold. First, it is against visible things, forthese excite, titillate and entice the soul to become attached to them and to take pleasure in them. And, second, it isagainst the principalities and powers of the terrible lord of this world (cf. Eph. 6:12).

105. The glory that shone from the face of Moses (cf. Exod. 34:29-30) was a prefiguring of the true glory of theHoly Spirit. Just as it was impossible then for anyone to gaze at it, so now the darkness of the passions cannot bearthe same glory shining in the souls of Christians, but is put to flight, repulsed by its brilliance.

106. The truly sincere and devout Christian who has tasted the sweetness of divine things, whose soul is infusedand mingled with grace, and who has entrasted his whole being to the purposes of grace, hates every worldly thing.Whether it is gold or silver, honor or glory, esteem or praise, or anything else, he is superior to it, and none of thesethings is able to captivate him; for he has experienced other riches and another honor and glory, his soul is nourishedby an incorruptible delight, and through the fellowship of the Spirit he has full and conscious assurance.

107. In understanding, spiritual knowledge and discrimination, such a person differs as much from other men asan intelligent

herdsman differs from witless cattle; for he partakes of another Spirit and another intellect, of anotherunderstanding, and of a wisdom that is not the wisdom of this world. As St Paul says: 'We proclaim wisdom to thosewho are perfect; not the wisdom of this world, or of the doomed rulers of this world; but we proclaim the secret

wisdom of God' (cf 1 Cor. 2:6-7). For this reason, such a person differs in everything from those who are dominatedby the spirit of the world, however intelhgent or wise they are. Again as St Paul says (cf. 1 Cor. 2:15), he judges allmen, he knows from what source he speaks and where he stands and among whom he is. Those dominated by thespirit of the world, on the other hand, have no power to know and judge him; this is possible only for one whopossesses as he does the Spirit of divinity. As St Paul puts it: 'We interpret spiritual things to those who possess theSpirit. The worldly man does not accept spiritual things: they are folly to him... But the spiritual man judges allthings, while he is himself judged by no one' (1 Cor. 2:13-15).

108. It is altogether impossible to attain the Holy Spirit unless you alienate yourself from all the things of thisworld and dedicate yourself to the pursuit of Christ's love. The intellect must divest itself of every material concernand give its attention solely to achieving this one goal, thus becoming worthy of uniting in one spirit with Christ. AsSt Paul writes: 'He who cleaves to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him' (1 Cor. 6:17). The soul that is whollyattached to some worldly thing like riches or glory or natural affection is not able to escape and transcend thedarkness of the powers of evil.

109. Truly sincere and devout souls cannot endure even a slight slackening of their longing for the Lord but, withtheir attention riveted entirely to His Cross,

they seek to grow ever more fully conscious of their spiritual progress.Wounded by their longing and, so to speak, hungering for the righteousness of the virtues and the illumination of theHoly Spirit, they place no reliance on themselves and do not think they are anything even though they have beenvouchsafed divine mysteries and partake of celestial felicity and grace. But the more they are enabled by grace toreceive spiritual gifts, the more insatiable and diligent becomes their pursuit of heavenly realities; and the more theyare aware of their spiritual progress, the more fervent grows their desire to participate in these realities. Spirituallyenriched, they feel themselves to be poor. As Scripture

puts it: 'Those who eat Me will still be hungry and those who drink Me will still be thirsty' (Ecclus. 24:21).

110. Such souls are not only granted complete freedom from the passions but also perfectly acquire theillumination and communion of the Holy Spirit in the fullness of grace. But souls that are sluggish and indolent anddo not seek in this life, and while still in the flesh, to achieve through patient endurance and long-suffering theheart's sanctrfication not just partially but totally, cannot hope to commune in the Holy Spirit with full consciousnessand assurance, or to be delivered from the passions of evil through the Spirit. Such sluggish and indolent souls, eventhough granted divine grace, are deceived by evil and cease to trouble themselves further: because they havereceived grace and enjoy the solace and spiritual sweetness that it confers, they grow complacent, not mortifyingtheir heart or humbling their thought, and not thirsting and aspiring after the full measure of dispassion. Content

with this slight solace of grace, they progress not in humility but in self-inflation, and are sometimes stripped evenof the gift they have been given. With the truly

devout soul it is different: even if it practices a thousand works ofrighteousness, crushes the body with extreme fasting and the most demanding vigils, and is vouchsafed various gifts,revelations and mysteries of the Spirit, it is so modest that it feels it has not yet even embarked on the spiritual pathor acquired any of the virtues; and it craves insatiably for divine love.

111. No one can attain such a state as this swiftly or easily: it can only be reached by way of many hardships andstruggles, after much time and diligence, testing and temptation, thus bringing one to the full measure of dispassion.It is he who has thus been sifted by every kind of suffering and tribulation, and who has courageously endured allthe trials of evil, that is finally found worthy to receive the great blessings, gifts and riches of the Spirit and to inheritthe kingdom of heaven.

112. The soul that has not yet acquired this citizenship in heaven and is not yet conscious of the heart'ssanctification should be full of sorrow and should implore Christ fervently, that it may attain this blessing as well asthe energy of the Spirit that is manifest in the intellect in the form of inexpressible visions. According toecclesiastical law, those who are conquered by bodily sins are initially excluded from communion by the priest;then, when they have

shown the appropriate repentance, they are allowed to communicate once more. Those, however, who have notstumbled but have lived in purity may advance to priesthood and take their place within the sanctuary, officiatingbefore the Lord at the Liturgy. We can apply the same distinction to inner communion in the Holy Spirit. Speakingof this, St Paul says: 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God the Father, and communion in theHoly Spirit...' (2 Cor. 15:14). Thus the Holy Trinity dwells in the pure soul, divine grace assisting. It dwells in

thesoul, not as it is in itself, for the Trinity is infinite and cannot be embraced by any created thing, but according toman's capacity and receptivity. Whenever the intellect turns aside from the pursuit of God's will and purpose, andgrieves the Spirit, it is cast out and excommunicated from spiritual felicity: God's grace and love, and all the energyof the Holy Spirit, withdraw, and the intellect is delivered up to afflictions, trials and evil powers until the soul againwalks in the path of the Spirit. When through confession and self-abasement it has shown that it is repentant, then itis again enabled to receive the visitation of grace and celestial felicity, even more than before. But should the soulnot grieve the Spirit in any way, but live acceptably, rejecting every evil thought and cleaving continually to theLord, rightly and fittingly will it go forward, receiving unutterable gifts and advancing from glory to glory and frompeace to greater peace. Finally, when it has attained the full measure of the Christian life, it will be ranged amongthe perfect liturgists and faultless ministers of Christ in His eternal kingdom.

113. Visible things are figures and reflections of invisible things. Thus the visible church figures and reflects thechurch of the heart, the visible priest the true priest of Christ's grace; and so on. In the visible church, if the readings,psalms and other parts of the appointed rite do not succeed one another in the proper sequence, then it is not possiblefor the priest to proceed with the celebration of the divine sacrament of Christ's body and blood; and even if the restof the order of the service is properly carried out, but the mystical thanksgiving of the sacrifice is not offered by thepriest and there is no communion in the body of Christ, then the ecclesiastical rite has not been fulfilled and againthe celebration of the sacrament is deficient. One must look on the life of the Christian in a similar way. He mayhave fasted, kept vigils, chanted the psalms, carried out every ascetic practice and acquired every virtue; but if themystic working of the

Spirit has not been consummated by grace with full consciousness and spiritual peace on the altar of his heart, all hisascetic practice is ineffectual and virtually fruitless, for the joy of the Spirit is not mystically active in his heart.

114. Fasting is good and so are vigils, ascetic practice and voluntary exile. But all these things are but the start, theprelude to the citizenship of heaven, so that it is altogether senseless to put one's trust merely in them. It sometimeshappens that we attain a certain state of grace but that evil, as we said above, lying in ambush within us, plays a trickon us: it deliberately withdraws and remains inactive, thus making us think that our intellect has been cleansed. Inthis way it produces in us the self-conceit of perfection, whereupon it stealthily attacks us and carries us down to thelowest depths of the earth. It often happens that young soldiers or brigands resort to tricks against the enemy: theyset up ambushes and, catching their opponents unexpectedly from behind and surrounding them, they slaughterthem. If that is what they do, then how much more skilled must evil be, that has dedicated itself for thousands ofyears to the crucial task of destroying souls. It knows exactly how to devise such ambushes in the secret places ofthe heart, sometimes keeping quiet and inactive deliberately in order to entice the soul into the self-conceit ofperfection. Indeed, the cardinal rule of the Christian life is not to put one's trust in acts of righteousness even if onepractices all of them, or to imagine that one has done anything great; and even if one participates in grace, one mustnot think that one has achieved anything or reached the goal. On the contrary, one should then hunger and thirst,grieve and weep even more, and be totally contrite in heart.

115. The spiritual state is like some royal palace that possesses many exterior courts, vestibules and outerresidences; then there are various inner buildings, usually housing the royal robes and the treasure; and then, yetfarther within, are the king's living quarters. Someone still in the outer courts and apartments may think he hasreached the inner chambers, but he would be wrong. The same is true where the spiritual life is concerned. Thosestruggling against greed and sleep, and continually occupied with psalms and prayers, should not think that they

have already attained the final place of rest: they are still in the exterior courts and vestibules, and have not evenreached the place where the royal robes and treasure are kept. Even if

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they are found worthy of some spiritual grace, again this should not deceive them into thinking that they haveattained their goal. They must examine to see whether they have found the treasure in the pot of clay (cf. 2 Cor. 4:7),whether they have put on the purple robe of the Spirit, whether they have seen the king and are at peace.

Again, our soul has depths and many faculties. When sin insinuates itself, it lays hold of all these faculties and allthe heart's thoughts. Then we ask for the grace of the Spirit: it is granted and perhaps embraces two of the soul'sfaculties. If we lack experience we fancy that this grace we have invoked has laid hold of all the soul's faculties andthat sin has been completely uprooted; we do not realize that most of our soul is still subject to sin. For, as has beenshown many times, it is possible for grace to be ceaselessly active, as the eye is in the body, and yet for the evil thatdespoils the mind to coexist with it. Hence, if we do not know how to discriminate, we fancy that we have attainedsomething great and begin to think highly of ourselves, deluding ourselves that we have reached the final stage ofpurification, though this is very far from the truth. As has been said, one of the devil's ploys is to withdrawdeliberately for a certain time and to remain inactive, thus promoting the conceit of perfection in those pursuing thespiritual way. But does the man who plants a vineyard immediately gather grapes? Or does he who sows seeds in theearth at once reap the harvest? Does the new-bom child attain maturity straight away? Think how Jesus Christ, theSon of God and God Himself, descended from the heights of glory to suffering, dishonor, crucifixion and death; andhow because of this self-abasement He was taken up again and set at the right hand of the Father. But the evilserpent, that first sowed in Adam the desire for divinity (cf. Gen. 3:5), dragged him down into disgrace through thispresumption. Think about these things and try to protect yourself as much as you can, keeping your heart always in astate of humility and contrition.

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VIThe Freedom of the Intellect

116. When you hear that Christ descended into hell in order to deliver the souls dwelling there, do not think thatwhat happens now is very different. The heart is a tomb and there our thoughts and our intellect are buried,imprisoned in heavy darkness. And so Christ comes to the souls in hell that call upon Him, descending, that is tosay, into the depths of the heart; and there He commands death to release the imprisoned souls that call upon Him,for He has power to deliver us. Then, lifting up the heavy stone that oppresses the soul, and opening the tomb. Heresurrects us - for we were truly dead - and releases our imprisoned soul from its lightless prison.

117. It often happens that Satan will insidiously commune with you in your heart and say: 'Think of the evil youhave done; your soul is full of lawlessness, you are weighed down by many grievous sins.' Do not let him deceiveyou when he does this and do not be led to despair on the pretext that you are being humble. After gaining admissionthrough the fall evil has the power to commune at all times with the soul, as man to man, and so to suggest sinfulactions to it. You should answer it: 'I have God's written assurance, for He says: "I desire, not the sinner's death, butthat he should return through repentance and live"' (cf Ezek. 33:11). What was the purpose of His descent to earthexcept to save sinners, to bring light to those in darkness and life to the dead?'

118. Just as the power of evil works by persuasion, not by compulsion, so does divine grace. In this way ourliberty and free will are preserved. If a man commits sins when he is subject to the devil, he himself pays thepenalty, not the devil, since he was impelled to evil not by force but by his own will. It is the same where a goodaction is concerned: grace does not ascribe this action to itself but to the man, giving him the credit for it, since he isthe cause of the goodness that befalls him. Grace does not make a man incapable of sin

by forcibly and compulsonly laying hold of his will but, though present, allows him freedom of choice, so as tomake it clear whether the man's own will inclines to virtue or to evil. For the law looks not to man's nature but to hisfree power of choice, which is capable of turning towards either good or evil.

119. One must guard the soul and not allow it to commune with impure pernicious thoughts. Just as the body isdefiled through intercourse with another body, so the soul is corrupted through coupling with evil and pollutedthoughts, assenting to them and uniting with them. Not simply thoughts of cunning and unchastity, but of every vice:unbelief, guile, self-esteem, anger, envy, contentiousness and so on. That is what St Paul means when he says: 'Letus cleanse ourselves from all pollution of the flesh and spirit' (2 Cor. 7:1). For corruption and unchastity work alsothrough shameless thoughts in the hidden places of the soul; and just as God will destroy the person who destroys

His temple, which is the body (cf 1 Cor. 3:17), so the person who corrupts his soul and intellect by assenting toshameless thoughts and uniting with them is liable to punishment. Just as one should guard the body against visiblesins, so one should guard the soul, which is the bride of Christ, against shameless thoughts. 'I betrothed you toChrist, hoping to present you to Him as a pure virgin to her sole husband', writes St Paul (2 Cor. 11:2). 'Guard yourheart with all diligence, for on this depends the outcome of-life', says Scripture (Prov. 4:23); and: 'Crooked thoughtsseparate us from God' (Wisd. 1:3).

120. Let everyone call his own soul to account, examining it and testing it to see to what it is attached; and shouldhe find that his heart does not conform to God's laws, let him try with all his strength to keep not only the body butalso the intellect free from corruption and involvement with evil thoughts - if, that is to say, he wishes God in Hispurity to take up His dwelling within him according to His promise. For God has promised to dwell within souls thatare pure and devoted to what is beautiful and good (cf. 2 Cor. 6:16).

121. The prudent farmer first clears his land of brambles before sowing it with seed. Similarly, the man whoaspires to receive from God the seed of grace must first clear the earth of his heart, so that when the seed of theSpirit falls it may

yield a good and abundant harvest. If he does not first cleanse himself from 'all pollution of theflesh and spirit' (2 Cor. 7:1), he remains flesh and blood and is far from the realm of life (cf. 1 Cor. 15:50).

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122. One must watch very carefully and in every direction for the enemy's trickery, guile and malice. Speakingthrough St Paul, the Holy Spirit says: 'I became all things to all men so as to save everyone' (cf. 1 Cor. 9:22); and inthe same way the enemy tries to become all things so as to bring everyone to destruction. He pretends to pray withthose who pray, so as to cheat them into self-conceit by making them think they have attained the state of prayer. Hefasts with those who fast, with the purpose again of filling them with self-conceit because they have succeeded infasting. With those who understand the Scriptures he tries to do the same, hoping to lead them astray by makingthem claim to possess spiritual knowledge. To those who have been granted a vision of the light, he pretends to offerthe same kind of vision, transforming himself into 'an angel of light' (2 Cor. 11:14), so that through this simulationof the true light he may seduce them to him. In short, he uses every kind of deceit and adapts himself to every kindof appearance, so that by assuming the likeness of what is good he becomes a plausible agent of destruction. 'Wedestroy evil thoughts and all the self-esteem that exalts itself against the knowledge of God', says St Paul (2 Cor.10:5). You see to what limits the impostor carries his defiance, wanting to cast down even those who have alreadyattained a divine knowledge of the truth. Hence we must guard the heart with all diligence and beseech God formuch understanding, so that He enables us to discern the devil's wiliness, to cultivate and train the intellect inunderstanding, to attend continually to our thoughts, and to conform ourselves to His will. There is no work greater

than this. 'Praise and magnificence are His works', as the psalmist writes (Ps. 111:3. LXX).

123. The devout soul, even if it practices all the virtues, ascribes everything to God and nothing to itself. God, onthe other hand, when He sees its sound and

healthy understanding and knowledge, attributes everything to the soul,and rewards it as though it had achieved everything through its own efforts. He does this in spite of the fact that, ifHe were to bring us to judgment, no true righteousness would be found in us. For material possessions andeverything that man regards as valuable and through which he is able to do good, the earth and whatever is in it, allbelong to God. Man's body and soul, and even his very being, are his only by grace. What, then, is left to him that hecan call his own, by virtue of which he can pride himself or vindicate himself? Yet when the soul recognizes - whatis

indeed the truth-that all its good actions for God's sake, together with all its understanding and knowledge, are to beascribed to God alone and that everything should be attributed to Him, then God accepts this as the greatest gift thatman can make, as the offering that is most precious in His eyes.

124. When a woman comes to live and share her life with a man, all that each has is held in common. They shareone house, a single being and existence. And the woman is mistress not only of the man's possessions but also of hisvery body: as St Paul says, 'The man does not have power over his own body, but the woman does' (1 Cor. 7:4).Similarly the soul, in its true and ineffable communion with Christ, becomes one spirit with Him (cf 1 Cor. 6:17). Itnecessarily follows that, since the soul has become His bride, it is as it were mistress of all His untold treasures. Forthere is no doubt that, when God joins Himself to the soul, all that He has belongs also to the soul, whether it beworld, life, death, angels, principalities, things present or things to come (cf. Rom. 8:38).

125. While the Israelites were well pleasing to the Lord-though they were never as they should have been, but atleast while they seemed to have some faith in Him-the Lord went before them in a pillar of fire and in a pillar ofcloud (cf. Exod. 13:21), He made the sea go back (cf. Exod. 14:21), and conferred on them a thousand otherwonders. But when they lost their love for God, then they were handed over to their enemies and were sold intobitter slavery. Something similar

happens in the case of the soul. When through grace it has come to know God andhas been cleansed of its many past stains, then it is granted gifts of grace; but when it does not ceaselessly maintainbefitting love for the celestial bridegroom, it falls away from the life in which it shared; for the enemy can attackeven those who have attained a high level of grace. Let us struggle, therefore, as much as we can, and guard our lifewith fear and trembling. In particular, those who have come to share in the Spirit of Christ should be careful not togrieve the Spirit by acting negligently in any way, great or small. Just as there is joy in heaven over one sinner whorepents (cf. Luke 15:7), so there is grief over one soul that falls away from eternal life.

126. When a soul has become worthy of grace, then God will give it spiritual knowledge, understanding anddiscrimination to the degree that is profitable for it. God will give these things when the

soul asks for them, so that it may be enabled acceptably to serve the Spirit that it has received, and not be seduced byevil, or led into error through ignorance, or perverted by negligence and lack of fear into doing something contraryto His will.

127. The energy of the passions-which is the worldly spirit of delusion, darkness and sin-fills the man in whom itdwells with concern for things of the flesh. The energy and power of the Spirit of light, on the other hand, dwell inthe saintly man, as St Paul indicates when he says: 'Do you seek a proof that Christ is speaking through me?' (2 Cor.13:3); and: '1 no longer live, but Christ lives in me' (Gal. 2:20); and: 'Those of you who have been baptized in Christhave clothed yourselves in Christ' (Gal. 3:27). And Christ affirms the same when He says: '1 and My Father willcome and make Our dwelling with him' (cf John 14:23). To those who are found worthy of them these thingshappen, not unperceived or without manifesting their activity, but with power and trath. The Law with itsimplacable sentence first brought men to repentance, placing them under an unbearably heavy yoke without beingable to hold out the least help. But what the

Law cannot offer, the power of the Spirit can provide: 'For what the Lawcould not do because it was enfeebled through our fleshlmess, God has done', says St Paul (Rom. 8:3). Since Christ'scoming the door of grace has been opened to those who truly believe, and they have been given the power of Godand the energy of the Holy Spirit.

128. Christ first sent the gift of the natural goodness of the Holy Spirit to His disciples (cf. Acts 2:3). Thereafterthe divine power, overshadowing all the faithful and dwelling in their souls, healed the passions of sin and deliveredthem from darkness and spiritual death. For until then the soul was wounded and captive, held fast in the obscurityof sin. Indeed, even now the soul is still in darkness if Christ has not yet come to dwell in it, and if the power of theHoly Spirit is not active in it, filling it with all strength and assurance. But to those on whom the grace of the divineSpirit has descended, coming to dwell in the deepest levels of their intellect, Christ is as the soul. As St Paul says:'He who cleaves to the Lord becomes one spirit with Him' (1 Cor. 6:17). And as the Lord Himself says: 'As 1 andThou are one, so may they be one in Us' (cf. John 17:21). What blessing and goodness has human nature received,abased as it was by the power of evil! But when the soul is entangled in the depravity of the passions, it becomes asthough one with it, and even though it possesses its own

will it cannot do what it wants to do. As St Paul says: 'What I do is not what I want to do' (Rom. 7:15). On the otherhand, how much closer is the union it enjoys when one with God's will, when His power is conjoined with it,sanctifying it and making it worthy of Him. For then in truth the soul becomes as the soul of the Lord, submittingwillingly and consciously to the power of the Holy Spirit and no longer acting in accordance with its own will.'What can separate us from the love of Christ' (Rom. 8:35), when the soul is united to the Holy Spirit?

129. He who wants to be an imitator of Christ, so that he too may be called a son of God, bom of the Spirit, mustabove all bear courageously and patiently the afflictions he encounters, whether these be bodily illnesses, slanderand vilification from men, or attacks from the unseen spirits. God in His providence allows souls to be tested byvarious afflictions of this kind, so that it may be revealed which of them truly loves Him. All the patriarchs,prophets, apostles and martyrs from the beginning of time traversed none other than this narrow road of trial andaffliction, and it was by doing this that they fulfilled God's will. 'My son,' says Scripture, 'if you come to serve theLord, prepare your soul for trial, set your heart straight, and patiently endure' (Ecclus. 2:1-2). And elsewhere it issaid: 'Accept everything that comes as good, knowing that nothing occurs without God willing it.' Thus the soul thatwishes to do God's will must strive above all to acquire patient endurance and hope. For one of the tricks of the devilis to make us listless at times of affliction, so that we give up our hope in the Lord. God never allows a soul thathopes in Him to be so oppressed by trials that it is put to utter confusion. As St Paul writes: 'God is to be trusted notto let us be tried beyond our strength, but with the trial He will provide a way out, so that we are able to bear it' (1Cor. 10:13). The devil harasses the soul not as much as he wants but as much as God allows him to. Men know whatburden may be placed on a mule, what on a donkey, and what on a camel, and load each beast accordingly; and thepotter knows how long he must leave the pots in the fire, so that they are not cracked by staying in it too long orrendered useless by being taken out of it before they are properly fired. If human understanding extends this far,must not God be much more aware, infinitely more aware, of the

degree of trial it is right to impose on each sod, so that it becomes tried and true, fit for the kingdom of heaven?

130. Hemp, unless it is well beaten, cannot be worked into fine yam, while the more it is beaten and carded thefiner and more serviceable it becomes. And a freshly molded pot that has not been fired is of no use to man. And achild not yet

proficient in worldly skills cannot build, plant, sow seed or perform any other worldly task. In a similarmanner it often happens through the Lord's goodness that souls, on account of their childlike innocence, participatein divine grace and are filled with the sweetness and repose of the Spirit; but because they have not yet been tested,and have not been tried by the various afflictions of the evil spirits, they are still immature and not yet fit for thekingdom of heaven. As the apostle says: 'If you have not been disciplined you are bastards and not sons' (Heb. 12:8).Thus trials and afflictions are laid upon a man in the way that is best for him, so as to make his soul stronger andmore mature; and if the soul endures them to the end with hope in the Lord it cannot fail to attain the promisedreward of the Spirit and deliverance from the evil passions.

131. It was by experiencing many torments and enduring even to the point of death that the martyrs earned theircrowns of glory; and the greater and more grievous the suffering, the greater their glory and the more intimate theircommunion with God. In the same way, when our souls are undergoing afflictions-whether they come in a visibleform from men, or in an intellectual form by means of evil thoughts, or derive from bodily illnesses-if we endurethem to the end, we will gain the same crowns as the martyrs and will enjoy the same intimacy with God. For wewill have sustained the martyrdom of afflictions produced by the evil spirits, as the martyrs sustained those thatcame through men; and the greater the diabolic afflictions we have endured, the greater the glory we receive fromGod, not only in the future but also in this present life through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

132. Since the road leading to immortal life is extremely narrow and full of affliction, and on account of this thereare few who traverse it (cf. Matt. 7:14), we must staunchly endure every trial of the devil, awaiting with hope ourheavenly reward. For, however great the afflictions we suffer, what are they compared with the promised futurereward, or with the grace of the Holy Spirit that

visits souls even in this present life, or with the deliverance that we have

received from the obscurity of evilpassions, or with the enormous debts we owe because of our sins'? As St Paul says: 'The sufferings of this presentlife are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us' (Rom. 8:18). Hence we mustpatiently endure everything for the Lord's sake, like brave soldiers dying for our King. Yet why is it that when wegave our attention to the world and to worldly things we did not fall into such distress, but now that we have come toserve God we suffer these manifold trials? It is because the devil, jealous of the blessings stored up for us, tries tomake our souls sluggish and lazy, lest by enduring these afflictions for Christ's sake in the way that He wishes weshould be granted our reward. No matter how much the devil arms himself against us, if we endure his attacks

courageously, with Christ's help all his designs against us will be brought to nothing. For we have Jesus as ourdefender and ally: let us keep in mind that He too passed through this present life vilified, persecuted and reviled,and that finally He was made perfect by a shameful death on the Cross (cf. Heb. 2:10).

133. If we want to endure every affliction and trial readily, let us long to die for Christ and let us keep this deathcontinually before our eyes. For we have been commanded to take up the cross and to follow Him (cf. Matt. 16:24);and this means that we must be prepared and ready for death. If we have this disposition we will endure everyaffliction, visible and invisible, much more easily. How can he who is anxious to the for Christ's sake have anydifficulty in putting up with suffering and distress? Yet we think afflictions are hard to bear, for we do not keepdeath for Christ's sake before us or rivet our mind always on Christ. But if we want to share His inheritance we mustbe willing to share His sufferings with an equal zeal. Those who love the Lord may be recognized by the fact thatbecause of their hope in Him they bear every affliction that comes, not simply courageously but alsowholeheartedly.

134. If we want to draw close to Christ we must first drag ourselves forcibly towards the good, even though ourheart may not wish it. 'The kingdom of heaven is subjected to violence, and the violent take it by force', said theLord (Matt. 11:12). And He also said: 'Strive to enter through the narrow gate' (Luke 13:24). We must, then, forceourselves even against our will towards virtue, towards love when we lack love, towards gentleness when we have

need of it, towards sympathy of heart and compassion, towards patience in the face of insult and contempt, andsteadfastness in the face of mockery, if we have not yet acquired the habit of these things, and towards prayer if westill have not attained spiritual prayer. If God sees us struggling in this way and forcibly dragging ourselves towardsthe good even when our heart seems to oppose it. He will bestow true prayer on us, will give us compassion,patience, forbearance, and in general will fill us with all the fruits of the Spirit. Indeed, if a person lacking the othervirtues forces himself towards, say, prayer alone, so that he may possess the grace of prayer, but at the same time isnot apathetic or indifferent with regard to gentleness, humility, love and all the other virtues that ennoble our soul,including firmness of faith and trust in Christ, then sometimes the Holy Spirit gives him, at least in part, the grace ofprayer for which he has asked, and fills him with gladness and repose. But he is still bereft of all the other virtues,because he has not forced himself to acquire them, nor has he besought Christ for them. Moreover, we should forceourselves, even unwillingly, not only towards the virtues mentioned, asking to receive them from God, but alsotowards the power to judge useless and wholly idle words, unworthy of being spoken; for we should assiduouslymeditate upon God's words both when we speak and in our heart. And we must also force ourselves not to get angryor to shout-'Rid yourselves of all bitterness, anger and shouting', the apostle says (Eph. 4:31); not to defame or to

judge anyone, not to become puffed up. When the Lord sees us putting pressure on ourselves and dragging ourselvesalong forcibly. He will assuredly give us the strength to do painlessly and easily what it was impossible for us to dobefore, even with force, because of the evil dwelling within us. And then the whole practice of the virtues becomesas it were part of our nature, since henceforward the Lord, as He promised, comes and dwells in us, as we equallydwell in Him; and in Him we fulfill the commandments with great ease.

135. When someone forces himself only towards prayer, while he does not exert or force himself with regard tohumility, love, gentleness and all the other interdependent virtues, the result is much as follows. Sometimes inresponse to

his entreaty divine grace visits him, because God in His goodness and love does respond to the petitionsof those who call upon Him; but because he has not habituated and trained himself in the practice of the othervirtues,

either he lapses from the grace he has received, falling through self-conceit, or else he does not dedicate himself tothis grace and grow in it. The abode and resting-place of the Holy Spirit is humility, love, gentleness and the otherholy commandments of Christ. If, therefore, a person desires to grow and to attain perfection by acquiring all thesevirtues, he must initially force himself to acquire and must establish himself in the first-mat is to say, in prayer-wrestling and striving with his heart to make it receptive and obedient to God. If he first forces himself in this way,completely subduing the resistance of his soul, through good habit making it obedient to him so that it joins withhim in his prayer and supplication, then the grace of prayer that he has been given by the Spirit grows and flourishes,reposing upon him together with the humility, love and blessed gentleness which he has also sought to acquire. So,then, the Spirit grants him these virtues as well, teaching him the true humility, genuine love and gentleness that hehas previously impelled himself to ask for. Thus he grows and is made perfect in the Lord, and is found worthy ofthe kingdom of heaven. For the humble man never falls: where, indeed, can he fall to if he regards himself as lowerthan all things? While lofty-mmdedness leads to great humiliation, humble-mmdedness on the contrary is a greatand highly exalted glory.

136. Those who truly love God do not serve Him in order to obtain the kingdom, as though they were engaged incommerce for the sake of gain, nor yet to avoid the punishment that is in store for sinners. They love Him becauseHe is their sole God and Creator, since they know the proper hierarchy of things and that it is the duty of servants toplease their lord and maker; and they submit to Him with great understanding in the face of all the afflictions thatbefall them. Many are the obstacles that stand in the way of pleasing God; for not merely poverty and obscurity butalso riches and honor are trials for the soul. Indeed, to some

extent even the solace and ease which grace bestows onthe soul can easily become a temptation and a hindrance if the soul is not properly conscious of these effects of

grace and does not enjoy them with great circumspection and understanding: for the spirit of evil tries to persuadethe soul to relax now it possesses grace, and so contrives to implant in it sluggishness and apathy. Thus evenparticipation in grace requires caution and discretion on the soul's part, so that the soul shows proper respect forgrace and produces fruit worthy of it. There is a danger, then, that

not only affliction but also relaxation may prove a temptation for the soul, since through both it is tested by theCreator, so as to make it quite clear that it loves Him not for the sake of some gain but for Himself alone, who istruly worthy of love and honor. For the inattentive, who are deficient in faith and immature in mind, there are manyobstacles to eternal life - not only distressing and painful things such as sickness, poverty and obscurity, but equallytheir opposites like riches, honor and praise from others, as well as the unseen warfare of the devil. For those withfaith, understanding and courage, on the other hand, such things aid and abet progress towards the kingdom of God:as St Paul says, 'AH things work together for good to them that love God' (Rom. 8:28). The devout man, therefore,breaking through, overcoming and transcending those things regarded by the world as obstacles, cleaves to divinelove alone. 'The cords of sinners have entangled me,' writes the psalmist, 'but I have not forgotten Thy law' (Ps.119:61. LXX).

137. St Paul most accurately and lucidly revealed to every believing soul the perfect mystery of the Christianfaith, showing to all how to attain experience of it through divine grace. This mystery is the effulgence of celestiallight in the vision and power of the Spirit. He did not want anyone to think that the illumination of the Spirit consistssimply in enlightening us through conceptual knowledge, and so to risk falling short of the perfect mystery of gracethrough

ignorance and laziness. To indicate the true character of spiritual knowledge St Paul therefore gives as anexample the glory of the Holy Spirit that shone from the face of Moses. 'If the ministry of death,' he says, 'engravedin letters on stone, was accompanied by such glory that the sons of Israel could not bear to gaze at the face of Mosesbecause of the glory, transitory though it was, that shone from it, then how much greater must the glory be thataccompanies the ministry of the Spirit? If the ministry of condemnation is glorious, the ministry of righteousnessmust greatly excel it in glory. Indeed, what once seemed full of glory now seems to have no glory at all, because it isoutshone by a glory that is so much greater. If what was transitory came with glory, what endures will be far moreglorious' (2 Cor. 3:7-11). He says 'transitory' because it was Moses' mortal body that shone with the glory of light.And he continues: 'Having such hope as this, we can proceed with great confidence' (2 Cor. 3:12). A little later heaffirms that this everlasting and immortal glory of the Spirit

shines even now with immortal and indestructible power in the immortal inner being of the saints: 'With unveiledface we all'-all, that is to say, who through perfect faith are bom in the Spirit -'reflect as in a mirror the glory of theLord, and are transfigured into the same image from glory to glory through the Lord who is the Spirit' (2 Cor. 3:18).The words 'with unveiled face' indicate the soul; he adds that when one turns back to the Lord the veil is taken off,and that the Lord is the Spirit (cf 2 Cor. 3:16-17). By this he dearly shows that from the time of Adam'stransgression a veil of darkness has encroached upon mankind and has covered the soul. But we believe that throughthe illumination of the Spirit this veil is now removed from truly faithful and saintly souls. It was for this reason thatChrist came; and to those who truly believe in Him God has given the grace to attain this measure of holiness.

138. As we said, the effulgence of the Holy Spirit is not merely some kind of revelation on the level of conceptualimages, or merely an illumination of grace. It is the true and unceasing effulgence of God's own light in the soul:'The God

who said, "Out of darkness let light shine", has made His light shine in our hearts, to give us theillumination of the knowledge of Christ's glory' (2 Cor. 4:6). And the psalmist says: 'Give light to my eyes, lest Isleep unto death' (Ps. 13:3) - that is to say, lest when my flesh is dissolved my soul is darkened by the veil of thedeath that is the result of sin. And other passages in the psalms speak in the same way: 'Open my eyes and I willperceive the wonders of Thy law' (Ps. 119:18); and: 'Send Thy light and Thy truth, and they will guide and lead meto Thy holy mountain and into Thy tabernacles' (Ps. 43:3); and: 'We have been marked by the light of Thycountenance, 0 Lord' (Ps. 4:6. LXX), and so on.

139. Again, the light that illumined St Paul on the road to Damaskos (cf Acts 9:3), the light through which he wasraised to the third heaven where he heard unutterable mysteries (cf. 2 Cor. 12:4), was not merely the enlightenmentof conceptual images or of spiritual knowledge. It was the effulgence of the power of the Holy Spirit shining in Hisown person in the soul. Such was its brilliance that corporeal eyes were not able to bear it and were blinded (cf. Acts9:8); and through it all spiritual knowledge is revealed and God is truly known by the worthy and loving soul.

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in this present life to put on Christ completely in the power and full assurance of grace, and to unite with theheavenly light of the incorruptible image, is initiated here and now substantively into the knowledge of all theheavenly mysteries. Moreover, in the great day of the resurrection the body also will be glorified with the sameheavenly image of glory; it will be caught up by the Spirit to the heavens (cf 1 Thess. 4:17), will be given a formlike the body of Christ's glory (cf. Phil. 3:21), and with Him will comhent the eternal kingdom.

141. In so far as a man through his own effort and faith has partaken of the heavenly glory of the Holy Spirit, andhas beautified his soul with good works, to the same degree will his body, too, be glorified on the day of theresurrection. What he has now stored up inwardly will then manifest itself outwardly, just as the fruit hidden duringwinter inside the tree comes out when it is spring. The

deiform image of the Spirit imprinted even now on the innerbeing of the saints will make their body, too, outwardly deiform and heavenly. But impure sinners who enwrap thesoul in the tenebrous veil of the spirit of this world, and who darken and disfigure the intellect with the ugliness ofthe passions, will outwardly manifest a body that is also tenebrous and full of every vileness.

142. When God in His love condemned Adam to death after his transgression, he first experienced this death inhis soul (cf. Gen. 3:19): his spiritual and deathless organs of perception, deprived of their celestial and spiritualenjoyment, were quenched and became as though dead. Later, after 930 years (cf. Gen. 5:5), came the death of thebody. Similarly, now that God has reconciled mankind through the Cross and death of the Savior, He restores to thetruly believing soul its enjoyment of spiritual light and mystery while it is still in the flesh, and once more enlightensits spiritual organs of perception with the divine light of grace. Later He will invest the body also with deathless andincorruptible glory.

143. Those who have withdrawn from the world and lead a godly and devout life are still in many cases subject tothe veil of the passions to which we all became liable through Adam's transgression: I refer to the carnal will,fittingly called death by St Paul when he said that 'the will of the flesh is death' (Rom. 8:6). Such people may belikened to men walking at night, their way lighted by the stars that are God's holy commandments; but since theyhave not yet completely escaped from the darkness, they cannot see everything

clearly. Thus, cultivating virtue with tribulation and great faith, they should beseech Christ, the sun of righteousness,to shine in their hearts, so that they can see everything lucidly. For to those who have reached the heights of virtue,and whose hearts have been actively illumined by spiritual light, the manifold attacks of the demons are clearlyevident, as are also the inexpressible vision and the hidden delight and beauty of the incorruptible world. As St Paulsays: 'The perfect, whose organs of perception have been trained by practice to discriminate between good and evil.

take solid food' (Heb. 5:14). And St Peter also says: 'We have the assurance of the message of the prophets; and untilthe day breaks and the morning star rises in your hearts you do well to give attention to it, for it is like a lampshining in a dark place' (2 Pet. 1:19). Most people, however, are exactly like men walking at night wholly withoutlight and not enjoying the slightest illumination in their souls from the divine Logos, so that they scarcely differfrom the blind. They are totally caught up in material entanglements and the chains of temporal life, neitherrestrained by divine awe nor performing any virtuous acts. On the other hand, those who live in the world and areillumined by the holy commandments as by the stars, and who do cleave to God with faith and awe, are not utterlyshrouded in darkness and for this reason can hope to attain salvation.

144. Worldly riches come to men from different sources and pursuits, from high-ranking office, trade, industry,farming and so on. Something similar is the case where spiritual riches are concerned: some derive them fromvarious gifts of grace, as St Paul makes clear when he says, 'Having then gifts different according to the grace givento us .. .' (Rom. 12:6); and some from various ascetic labors and acts of righteousness and virtue carried out for Godalone, when through grace they refrain from judging, mocking or censuring their fellow-men. But some can belikened to people who dig for gold, and they are quite unmistakable: they are those who strive forward withforbearance and patience, gradually enriching the blessed hope that sustains them. Unmistakable, too, are those whoare like hirelings, who are stupid and sluggish, who consume at once whatever they can lay hands on, and neverpatiently bring to conclusion what they have undertaken but are always threadbare and indigent. Even if they areanxious and ready to receive grace, they are lazy, indolent and fickle when it comes to putting it into practice ordeveloping it. They have

no sooner started than they have had enough, and lose all impetus for spiritual labor. For this reason whatever gracethey may have received is taken away from them. The dull, slothful, lifeless and negligent disposition, always atvariance

with grace, barren of good works, worthless and ignoble in the sight of God, is recognizable both now andin the age to come.

145. When man broke God's commandment and was expelled from paradise he was bound in consequence as bytwo chains. The first is that of temporal things and worldly pleasures-riches, glory, affection, wife, children,relations, country, possessions and, in short, all visible things from which God has summoned us to liberateourselves through our own free choice. The second is hidden and invisible; for the soul is bound by a certain chainof darkness to the spirits of evil, and because of this darkness it cannot love God, or believe or pray as it wishes. Inconsequence of the transgression of the first man, we each of us find that all things visible and invisible are opposedto us. Thus, whenever someone listens obediently to the word of God, he must first begin by cutting his attachment

to temporal things and renouncing all worldly pleasures. Then, if he waits attentively upon God and enters intoconstant communion with Him, he will receive the power to learn that there is another struggle and another battle ofthoughts hidden in the depths of his heart. Persevering in this way and beseeching Christ's mercy, combining greatfaith in Him with endurance, he can with God's help escape from these inner bonds and fetters and from thedarkness of the spirits of evil, which are the energies of the hidden passions. Through Christ's grace and power wecan bring this war to a successful conclusion. But by ourselves and without divine aid it is altogether impossible forus to free ourselves from the struggle against evil thoughts: we can merely rebut them and not take pleasure in them.

146. If a man is entangled in the things of this world, caught by their many shackles, and seduced by the evilpassions, it is very hard for him to recognize that there is another invisible struggle and another inner warfare. But,after detaching himself from all visible things and worldly pleasures, and beginning to serve God, he then becomescapable of recognizing the nature of this inner struggle and unseen warfare against the passions. Yet, as we said,unless he first achieves outward detachment by aspiring to serve God totally with his whole soul, he will notrecognize the secret passions of evil and his

inner fetters. On the contrary, he will be in danger of thinking that he is healthy and not ailing, when in fact he is lullof wounds and nourishes unseen passions. But if he has despised desire and glory, he may first become aware ofthese inner passions and then fight against them, calling on Christ with faith and receiving from heaven the weaponsof the Spirit: the breastplate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation, the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit(cfEph. 6:14,17).

147. The devil tries to disrupt our hope in Christ and our love for Him in a thousand ways. Inwardly he bringsafflictions on the soul by means of the evil spirits, or he fills it with foul and immoral thoughts by stirring up itsmemory of former sins, so as to make it grow sluggish and to despair of ever attaining salvation. His aim is to cheatthe soul into thinking that it generates these thoughts of its own accord and that they are not sown in it maliciouslyby an alien spirit. Or else he inflicts bodily suffering and brings on us vilification and tribulation through the agencyof other people. But the more he shoots his fiery arrows at us, the more we must enkindle our hope in God, knowingwith certainty that He deliberately permits souls that long for Him to suffer these things, so as to discover if theytruly love Him.

148. Compared with the incorruptible and eternal world, a thousand years of this world are like a grain of sand. Ilook at things in this way. Suppose it is within your power to be sole king of the entire world and to possess all itstreasures; and suppose that your rule had begun with the first creation of mankind, and was to continue until the finaltransformation of the whole visible world. Would you, then, given the choice, exchange the true and unchanging

kingdom, that contains nothing fleeting or perishable, for this temporal kingdom? Not, it seems to me, if yourjudgment is sound and you have a proper regard for yourself. 'What good will it do a man if he gains the wholeworld but loses his soul?' Christ asks His disciples (Matt. 16:26); and He says that there is nothing equal in value tothe soul. Since the soul by itself is far more valuable than the whole world and any worldly kingdom, is not thekingdom of heaven also more valuable? That the soul is more valuable is shown by the fact that God did not see fitto bestow on any other created thing the union and fellowship with

His own coessential Spirit. Not sky, sun, moon,stars, sea, earth or any other visible thing did He bless in this way, but man alone, whom of

all His creatures He especially loved. If, therefore, no one with sound judgment would exchange the eternalkingdom for all the great wealth of the world and for the kingdom of the whole earth, how great is the folly of thosewho exchange it for accidental and casual things such as desire for something, meager glory, mediocre gain, and soon? For whenever we love something worldly and are attached to it, we are certainly choosing it instead of thekingdom of heaven. Worst of all, we regard this thing as God: as it has been said, 'A man is the slave to whateverhas mastered him' (2 Pet. 2:19). We should, therefore, commit ourselves entirely to God, making ourselvesdependent on Him and crucifying ourselves in soul and body as we advance in the practice of all His holycommandments.

149. Would you think it right if this perishable glory, ephemeral kingdom and other such temporal things weregained only after great toil and sweat by those who hanker after them, while to reign endlessly with Christ and toenjoy inexpressible blessings was something to be gained cheaply and easily, and could be attained without laborand effort by anyone who wished?

150. What is the purpose of Christ's advent? The restoration and reintegration of human nature in Him. For Herestored to human nature the original dignity of Adam, and in addition bestowed on it the unutterable grace of theheavenly inheritance of the Holy Spirit. Leading it out of the prison of darkness. He showed it the way and the doorto life. By traversing this way and knocking on this door we can enter the kingdom of heaven. As He said: 'Ask andit will be given to you... knock and it will be opened to you' (Matt. 7:7). By passing through this door it is possiblefor everyone to attain the freedom of his soul, to cut off his evil thoughts, and to become Christ's bride and consortthrough the communion of the Holy Spirit. Such is the ineffable love of the Lord towards man, whom he has createdin His own image.

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[V4] 1, [V4] 2, [V4] 3, [V4] 4, [V4] 5, [V4] 6, [V4] 7, [V4] 8, [V4] 9, [V4] 10[V4] 11

St Symeon the New Theologian

(949-1022)(Toliime 4, pp. 11-75)

Introductory Note

Among the Greek Fathers there are few if any who are better known to us than St Symeon the New Theologian(949-1022). We are fortunate to have not only the biography composed by his disciple Nikitas Stithatos but alsofrequent personal references, of the utmost vividness, in the writings of St Symeon himself/ His life-story illustratesthe central significance of spiritual fatherhood within the Orthodox mystical tradition. Bom in Asia Minor, fromparents belonging to the lesser provincial nobility, St Symeon was sent as a child of eleven to an uncle inConstantinople, probably with the expectation that he would eventually follow a career in the imperial service. Butwhen he was fourteen there occurred an encounter that proved decisive for his future life - his meeting with a monkat Constantinople, also named Symeon and usually styled 'the Pious' or 'the Devout' (6 ILvika^f[(^) who belonged tothe celebrated monastery of Studios. St Symeon the Studite (c. 917-986/7), who soon became spiritual father to theyoung Symeon, was a lay monk, never ordained priest; for in the Christian East the ministry of spiritual directionhas often been exercised by monks not in holy orders, and also, although less frequently, by nuns and even by non-monastics. St Symeon the New Theologian himself wrote a treatise specifically defending the right of monks whoare not priests to 'bind' and 'loose', that is, to receive confessions and to confer absolution."

' The fullest treatment of St Symeon's life and teaching is by Archbishop Basil (Krivocheine), In the Light of Christ: Saint Svmeon the NewTheologian (Crestwood, 1986). For further bibliography, see H.J.M. Turner, St Symeon the New Theologian and Spiritual Fatherhood (Leiden,1990), pp. ix-xii; and the article by T. Spidlik in Dictionnaire de Spiritualiti xiv (1990), cols 1387-1401. The Life by Nikitas Stithatos has beenedited (with a French translation) by 1. Hausherr and G. Horn, Vie de Svmeon le Nouveau Theologien (949-1022) par Nicetas Stethatos(Orientalia Christiana xii [45): Rome, 1928). In our

introductory note we follow the generally accepted dating of St Symeon's life; but it ispossible that in fact he was bom in 957 and died in 1035, in which case the dating of the other events in his life must also be adjusted.

^ See K. Holl, Enthusiasmus undBussgewalt beim griechischen Monchtum (Leipzig, 1898), pp. 110-27.

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St Symeon the New Theologian

Introductory Note

Under the Studite's guidance, the young Symeon's life of prayer developed rapidly. When he was aged abouttwenty - and still fully involved in a secular career - he received a vision of the divine and uncreated light, the firstin a series of such visions that marked his later years. After an unhappy relapse to a worldly manner of life, in 977he entered the monastery of Studios as a novice. But a group of monks in the community, resenting his closerelationship with his spiritual father Symeon the Studite, forced him to leave within less than a year. His spiritualfather placed him in the nearby Constantinopolitan monastery of St Mamas, and here in quick succession he wasprofessed as a monk, and then (c. 98o) ordained to the priesthood and elected abbot, an office that he held for thenext twenty-five years. The monastery, at that time in a state of decline, underwent a striking revival under hisleadership. St Symeon became well known in the capital as a spiritual father, with many prominent lay peoplecoming to him for counsel and confession.

There is every reason to believe that St Symeon was a loving and compassionate shepherd to his monks. But hewas also, in his own words, an 'enthusiastic zealot' who set high standards. He expected, for example, that eachmonk would receive communion frequently and, following the teaching of St Symeon the Studite, he urged that noone should ever do so without shedding tears. His demanding expectations led in 996-8 to a revolt among themonks, but St Symeon eventually succeeded in reconciling the dissidents. More seriously, a few years later he was

denounced to the church authorities by persons outside the monastery, among other reasons because, after thedeath of his spiritual father Symeon the Studite, he had at once begun to honour him publicly as a saint. Doubtlessthe New Theologian's teaching on lay confession also brought him under suspicion. These

continuing attacks ledhim to resign his position as abbot in 1005. Four years later, in 1009, he was tried before the patriarch and the holysynod and condemned to exile at Paloukiton, on the Asiatic coast of the Bosphorus. Although the sentence wassoon revoked and he was even offered a bishopric, he chose to continue living at his place of exile, in the companyof a few disciples. Here he died on 12 March 1022.

The high respect felt for St Symeon by his followers is evident in the title that they ascribed to him, 'the NewTheologian'. The term 'theologian' is to be understood in this context, not in its modem

academic sense, but to signify a person of prayer, who speaks about the vision of God on the basis of his own immediateexperience. Before St Symeon's time, the title 'theologian' had been reserved in the Orthodox Church chietly for two writers: forSt John the Evangelist, author of the most 'mystical' of the four Gospels, and for St Gregory of Nazianzos, writer ofcontemplative poetry, honoured in the Christian East as one of the Three Great Hierarchs. If St Symeon is called 'the NewTheologian', this means that he is to be ranked with the other two as a faithful witness to the continuing tradition of inner prayer.As well as being in this experiential sense a 'theologian', St Symeon may also be regarded as a 'missionary' of the mystical life.Convinced that contemplative union with God is possible for all alike, he believed that it was his duty to share with others hisexperiences of divine grace. When he spoke in this way about his visions, it was not from pride but from a radical humility. 'IfGod has shown such mercy to me a sinner,' he was saying in effect, 'then certainly He can and will do as much and more for you.The best is for all - if only you will accept it.'

From the voluminous writings of St Syrneon, the editors St Makarios and St Nikodimos have selected two for inclusion in thePhilokalia. The first work. On Faith, is one of the catecheses or homilies which St Symeon delivered to his monks while abbot ofSt Mamas. Here he speaks in the third person about the inner life of a young man named George. It is generally agreed that thisis none other than Symeon himself; possibly George was the baptismal name that he used before entering the monastic life. Thenarrative makes abundantly plain how crucial was the role played in his development by his spiritual father Symeon the

Studite,the 'holy monk as he is termed in the text. It is significant that, in the work by Mark the Ascetic that the young Symeon wasgiven to read, he was struck particularly by the injunction, 'Tisten to your conscience', and by the reference to 'the energies of theHoly Spirit': an insistence on the need for direct personal experience is one of the leitmotifs in the New Theologian's teaching.When describing his initial vision of divine light, accompanied by tears of joy, he emphasizes that this happened to him

' In the Philokalia, the work On Faith (= Cathechesis 22) is given in a modem Greek paraphrase. We have based our translation on thecritical text of the original Greek in the edition of the Catecheses by Archbishop Basil (Krivocheine), Sources chretiennes 104 (Paris, 1964), pp.364-93. E.T. of the Catecheses: C.J. deCatanzaro, Symeon the New Theologian: The Discourses (The Classics of Western Spirituality: NewYork, 1980).

while still a layman, heavily burdened by worldly distractions: this shows that the heights of contemplation areaccessible to anyone with genuine faith in God, whatever their outward circumstances.

The second piece. One Hundred and Fifty-Three Practical and Theological Texts, is a composite work. Theopening section, §§ 1-118, comes from a longer series of 226 texts by St Symeon the New Theologian.^ Thesection that follows, §§ 119-52, is by the New Theologian's teacher, St Symeon the Studite, while the first part of §153 is from the Life of St Symeon the New Theologian by Nikitas Stithatos, § 31.

The section by the New Theologian alludes to many of his favourite themes: to the vision of divine light (§§68,

105-6) and the gift of tears (§§ 67, 69); to the need for conscious experience of the Holy Spirit (§ 85); to theministry of the spiritual father (§§ 16-19, 38-9, 41) - but note that the disciple's obedience is not wholly unqualified(§ 33). St Symeon's rigour as an 'enthusiastic zealot' is evident in his demand for a definitive break on the monk'spart with all past links, especially with his family (§§ 3-8). At the same time the New Theologian is generous in hisrecognition of the variety of individual vocations: we cannot speak in the abstract of any one

form of life as higherthan another - of the hermit life, for example, as superior to the cenobitic - for the best and highest form of life is,for each one, the particular way to which he or she is personally called (§§ 88-92). The fullness of contemplation isaccessible to married people living in cities as well as to the desert- dweller.

In the texts that follow, from the pen of St Symeon the Studite, the situation envisaged is that of a large, highlyorganized community such as the Studios monastery itself. The author insists upon strict poverty, the cutting-off ofself-will, simplicity in personal relationships, the avoidance of all unnecessary complications. He speaks aboutcompunction (katanyxis) as an experience that is not so much penitential as joyful (§ 140), about the vision of divinelight (§ 150), and about the importance of obedience to the spiritual father (§§ 129, 141) - themes which his disciplethe New Theologian was later to develop.

' There is a critical text of the full series by J. Darrouzes, Symeon le Nouveau Theologien: Chapitres Theologiques Gnostiques et Pratiques(Sources chretiennes 51: 2nd ed., Paris, 1980); E.T., P. McGuckin (Cistercian Studies Series 41: Kalamazoo, 1982). For §§1-118 is ourtranslation follows the critical text of Darrouzes; for §§119-53 we have used the text in the Greek Philokalia. On the significance of the number153, see The Philokalia, vol. i (London & Boston, 1979), p. 56.

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St Symeon the New TheologianIntroductory Note

In a memorable phrase - 'Love is greater than prayer' (§ 143) - the Studite affirms the primacy of love. St Symeon the NewTheologian would not have disagreed (see § 61).

' A quotation from St John Klimakos, The Ladder of Divine Ascent, Step 26 (P.G. Ixxxviii, 1028B); E.T., C. Luibheid and N. Russell (TheClassics of Western Spirituality: New York, 1982), p. 239.

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St Symeon the New TheologianOn Faith

Brethren and fathers, it is good that we make God's mercy known to all and speak to those close to us of thecompassion and inexpressible bounty He has shown us. For as you know 1 neither fasted, nor kept vigils, nor slepton bare ground, but - to borrow the Psalmist's words - '1 humbled myself and, in short, 'the Lord saved me'.

Or, to put it even more briefly, 1 did no more than believe and the Lord accepted me (cf. Ps. 116:6, 10; 27:10.LXX). Many things stand in the way of our acquiring humility, but there is nothing that prevents us from having

faith. For if we want it with all our heart, it will immediately become active in us, since it is God's gift to us and apre-eminent characteristic of our nature, even though it is also subject to our individual power of free will. That iswhy even Scythians and other outlandish peoples have faith in each other's words. Yet to demonstrate through actualfacts the effect of our deeply rooted faith and to confirm what I have just said, I will tell you a story related to me bysomeone who was entirely trustworthy.

A man by the name of George, young in age - he was about twenty - was living in Constantinople during our owntimes. He was good-looking, and so studied in dress, manners and gait, that some of those who take note only ofouter appearances and harshly judge the behavior of others began to harbor malicious suspicions about him. Thisyoung man, then, made the acquaintance of a holy monk who lived in one of the monasteries in the city; and to himhe opened his soul and from him he received a short rule which he had to keep in mind. He also asked him for abook giving an account of the ways of monks and their ascetic practices; so the elder gave him the work of Mark theMonk, On the Spiritual Law. This the young man accepted as though it had been sent by God Himself, and in theexpectation that he would reap richly from it he read it from end to end with eagerness

and attention. And though he benefited from the whole work, there were three passages only which he fixed in hisheart.

The first of these three passages read as follows: 'If you desire spiritual health, listen to your conscience, do all ittells you, and you will benefit.' The second passage read: 'He who seeks the energies of the Holy Spirit before he hasactively observed the commandments is like someone who sells himself into slavery and who, as soon as he isbought, asks to be given his freedom while still keeping his purchase-money.' And the third passage said thefollowing: 'Blind is the man crying out and saying: "Son of David, have mercy upon me" (Luke 18:38). He prayswith his body alone, and not yet with spiritual knowledge. But when the man once blind received his sight and sawthe Lord, he acknowledged Him no longer as the Son of David but as the Son of God, and worshipped Him' (cf.John 9:38).

On reading these three passages the young man was struck with awe and fully believed that if he examined hisconscience he would benefit, that if he practiced the commandments he would experience the energy of the HolySpirit, and that through the grace of the Holy Spirit he would recover his spiritual vision and would see the Lord.Wounded thus with love and desire for the Lord, he expectantly sought His primal beauty, however hidden it mightbe. And, he assured me, he did nothing else except carry out every evening, before he went to bed, the short rulegiven to him by the holy elder. When his conscience told him, 'Make more prostrations, recite additional psalms, andrepeat "Lord, have mercy" more often, for you can do so', he readily and unhesitatingly obeyed, and did everythingas though asked to do it by God Himself. And from that time on he never went to bed with his conscientereproaching him and saying, 'Why have you not done this?" Thus, as he followed it scrupulously, and as daily itincreased its demands, in a few days he had greatly added to his evening office.

During the day he was in charge of a patrician's household and each day he went to the palace, engaging in the

tasks demanded by such a life, so that no one was aware of his other pursuits. Every evening tears flowed from hiseyes, he multiplied the prostrations he made

with his face to the ground, his feet together and rooted to the spot onwhich

he stood. He prayed assiduously to the Mother of God with sighs and tears, and as though the Lord was physicallypresent he fell at His most pure feet, while like the blind man he besought mercy and asked that the eyes of his soulshould be opened. As his prayers lasted longer every evening, he continued in this way until midnight, nevergrowing slack or indolent during this period, his whole body under control, not moving his eyes or looking up. Hestood still as a statue or a bodiless spirit.

One day, as he stood repeating more in his intellect than with his mouth the words, 'God, have mercy upon me, asinner' (Luke 18:13), suddenly a profuse flood of divine light appeared above him and filled the whole room. As thishappened the young man lost his bearings, forgetting whether he was in a house or under a roof; for he saw nothingbut light around him and did not even know that he stood upon the earth. He had no fear of falling, or awareness ofthe world, nor did any of those things that beset men and bodily beings enter his mind. Instead he was wholly unitedto non-material light, so much so that it seemed to him that he himself had been transformed into light. Oblivious ofall else, he was filled with tears and with inexpressible joy and gladness. Then his intellect ascended to heaven andbeheld another light, more lucid than the first. Miraculously there appeared to him, standing close to that light, theholy, angelic elder of whom we have spoken and who had given him the short rule and the book.

When I heard this story, I thought how greatly the intercession of this saint had helped the young man, and howGod had chosen to show him to what heights of virtue the holy man had attained.

When this vision was over and the young man, as he told me, had come back to himself, he was struck with joyand amazement. He wept with all his heart, and sweetness mingled with his tears. Finally he fell on his bed, and atthat moment the cock crowed, announcing the middle of the night. Shortly after the church bells rang for matins andhe got up as usual to chant the office, not having had a thought of sleep during the whole night.

As God knows - for He brings things about according to decisions of which He alone is aware - all this happenedwithout the young man having done anything more than you have heard. But what he did he did with true faith andunhesitating expectation. And let it not be said that he did these things by way of an experiment, for he had neverspoken or thought of acting in such a spirit. Indeed, to make

experiments and to try things out is evidence of a lack of faith. On the contrary, after rejecting every passion-charged and self-indulgent thought this young man, as he himself assured me, paid such attention to what his

conscience said that he regarded aU material things of hfe with indifference, and did not even find pleasure in foodand drink, or want to partake of them frequently.

You have heard, my brethren, what great things faith in God can bring about when it is confirmed by actions. Youwill have realized that youth is not to be despised and that without understanding and fear of God old age is useless.You have learnt that the heart of a city cannot prevent us from practicing God's commandments so long as we arediligent and watchful, nor can stillness or withdrawal from the world be of any benefit if we are lazy and negligent.We have certainly all heard of David, and we admire him and say that he is unique and there cannot be another likehim. Yet here, lo and behold, is something more than David. For David was specially chosen by God: he wasanointed to be prophet and king; he was inspired by the Holy Spirit; and he was granted many revelationsconcerning God. Thus when he sinned and was deprived of the grace of the Spirit and of his gift of prophecy, andwas estranged from his usual communion with God, is there anything astonishing in the fact that he should recall thestate of grace from which he had fallen and should ask to enjoy those privileges once more (cf Ps. 51:11-12)? Butour young man had never even conceived of any of these things. He was devoted only to what is transient andworldly, and he could imagine nothing superior to such things. Yet - how unpredictable are Thy ways. Lord - he hadonly to hear of these divine realities and he believed in them immediately; indeed, he believed so surely that heimplemented his faith in corresponding action. It was thanks to this action that

his mind took wing and rose toheaven, drawing to it the compassion of Christ's Mother. Through her intercession God was appeased and bestowedon him the grace of the Spirit. This gave him the strength to rise to heaven and to behold the light that everyonelongs for but very few attain.

This young man had not observed long fasts or slept on the ground, worn a hair shirt or shaved his head, nor hadhe shunned the world physically, though he had in spirit, by keeping a few vigils; yet he appeared to be superior toLot, so renowned in Sodom (cf. Gen. 19). Or, rather, although in a body, he was an angel, constrained yetunconstrained, visible but transcending physicality, human in appearance

but immaterial when perceived spiritually, outwardly all things to all men (cf. 1 Cor. 9:22) but inwardly solelypresent to God alone, the knower of all things. Thus when the visible sun set, he found that its place was taken bythe tender light of spiritual luminosity, which is the pledge and foretaste of the unceasing light that is to succeed it.And this was as it should be; for the love of that for which he was searching took him out of the world, beyondnature and all material things, filling him wholly with the Spirit and transforming him into light. And all thishappened to him while he was living in the middle of the city, and was steward of a house, having in his chargeslaves and free men and carrying out all the tasks incumbent on such a life.

Enough has been said in praise of this young man and to stimulate you to a similar longing, in imitation of him.Or would you still like me to speak of other things, greater than these - things which perhaps you might not be ableto take in? Yet what can be greater or more perfect than the fear of God? Indeed, nothing is greater than this. It is asSt Gregory of Nazianzos has written: "Fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom" (Prov. 1:7). For where there isfear, there the commandments are kept, and where the commandments are kept the flesh is purified, together with

the cloud that envelops the soul and prevents it from clearly seeing the divine radiance. Where there is thispurification there is illumination, and illumination is the fulfillment of the longing of those who desire the greatest ofall supernal

things or even that which is above all greatness." With these words he showed that illumination by theSpirit is the endless end of every virtue, and that whoever attains it has finished with everything sensory and hasbegun to experience the knowledge of spiritual realities.

Such, my brethren, are the wonders of God. And God reveals His hidden saints so that some may emulate themand others have no excuse for not doing so. Provided they live a worthy life, both those who choose to dwell in themidst of noise and hubbub and those who dwell in monasteries, mountains and caves can achieve salvation. Solelybecause of their faith in Him God bestows great blessings on them. Hence those who because of their laziness havefailed to attain salvation will have no excuse to offer on the day of judgment. For He who promised to grant ussalvation simply on account of our faith in Him is not a liar. So show mercy to yourselves and to us who love you

and often grieve and shed tears far you - for this is what the merciful and compassionate God has asked us to do.Trust in the Lord with all your soul. Leave the world and everything that passes away, and draw close to God andcleave to Him; for in a little while 'heaven and earth will pass away' (Matt. 24:35), and apart from Him there will beno firm ground on which to stand, no limit, nothing to check the fall of sinners. God is infinite and cannot begrasped. Tell me, then, if you can, what place there will be for those who fall away from His kingdom?

I grieve, I exhaust my heart, I pine for you when I bring to mind that we have a Lord so bountiful andcompassionate that simply if we have faith in Him He grants us gifts beyond our imagination - gifts we have neverheard or thought of and that 'man's heart has not grasped' (1 Cor. 2:9). Yet we, like beasts, prefer the earth and thethings of the earth that through His great mercy it yields in order to supply our bodily needs; and if we use thesethings modestly, then our soul may ascend unhampered towards divine realities, nourished spiritually by the HolySpirit according to the degree of our purification and to the level to which we have ascended.

This is our purpose, for this we were created and brought forth: that after having

received lesser blessings in thisworld we may through our gratitude to God and our love for Him enjoy great and eternal blessings in the life tocome. But, alas, far from having any concern for the blessings in store, we are even ungrateful for those at hand, andwe are like the demons, or - if trath be told - even worse. Thus we deserve greater punishment than they, for wehave been given greater blessings. For we know that God became for our sakes like us in everything except sin, sothat He might deliver us from delusion and free us from sin. But what is the use of saying this? The truth is that webelieve in all these things only as words, while we deny them where our acts are concerned. Is not Christ's nameuttered everywhere, in towns and villages, in monasteries and on mountains? Search diligently, if you will, and findout whether anyone keeps His commandments. Among thousands and myriads you will scarcely find one who is aChristian both in word and in act. Did not our Lord and God say in the Gospel, 'He that believes in Me will also dowhat I do - indeed, he will do greater things' (John 14:12)? But which of us dares to say, 'I do Christ's work and Itruly believe in Christ?' Do you not see, brethren, that on the day of judgment we risk being classed among the

unbelievers and will be chastised more severely even than those ignorant of Christ? Inevitably either we must bechastised as unbelievers or Christ is a liar - and that, my brethren, is impossible.

I have written this not to dissuade you from withdrawing from the world or to encourage you to live in the midstof it. Rather I have written it so that all who happen to read it may be assured that whoever wants to act rightly willreceive from God the power so to do, wherever he may be. In fact, the tale I have told actually encourageswithdrawal. For if the young man in question, who lived in the world and never had a thought of renouncing it, or ofshedding his possessions, or of submitting to the rule of obedience, received such mercy from God simply becausehe trusted in Him and called on Him with his whole soul, how much greater blessings should those hope to attainwho have abandoned all worldly things and all worldly relationships and who as God commanded have for His sakesurrendered their very souls to death (cf Luke 14:26)? Moreover, if, unhesitating in your faith and wholehearted inyour determination, you do begin to act rightly and to experience the blessing that comes from so doing, you will

ofyour own accord realize that worldly cares and living in the world are a great obstacle to those who wish to live inconformity with God. What we have related about this young man is amazing and unexpected, and we have neverheard of anything like it happening to anyone else. Even though it may have happened to others or may happen inthe future, they should realize that they will lose the blessing they have received unless they do promptly abandonthe world. This is exactly what I learnt from that young man.

I subsequently met him after he had become a monk, in the third or fourth year of his monastic life. He was thenthirty-two. I knew him very well: we had been friends from childhood and had been brought up together. On accountof this he also told me the following: 'A few days after that incredible change in my life and the more than humanhelp I received, I was continually attacked by the temptations of my worldly life - temptations that thwarted mysecret activities and that little by little deprived me of the blessings I had been given. As a result I longed to getcompletely away from the world and in solitude to seek out Him who had appeared to me. For, brother, I wasconvinced that He had appeared to me solely in order to draw me, unworthy as I was, to Himself and to separate meentirely from the world. Yet lacking the strength to respond straight away I gradually forgot everything I have

told you about and fell into utter darkness, to such an extent that 1 no longer remembered or even thought ofanything, major or minor, connected with those experiences. Rather, I plunged into evil ways more deeply than everbefore and ended up in such a state that it was as if I had never understood or heard Christ's holy words. Even thesaint who had once shown me such mercy and who had given me that short rule and had sent me that book becamefor me merely someone I had happened to meet, and I gave no thought to the things I had seen because of him. I amtelling you this,' he continued, 'so you can see quite clearly the pit of perdition into which I fell, contemptible as Iwas, because of my sloth and negligence, and so you will be filled with amazement at the inexpressible blessings

that God subsequently bestowed on me.

'For - though I do not know how to explain it - unknown to myself love and trust toward that saintly elder hadremained in my unhappy heart; and it was I think for this reason that, as a result of his prayers, after many years Godin His compassion had mercy on me. Through him God again dragged me out of my chronic state of delusion andrescued me from the pit of evil. In spite of my unworthmess I had not completely broken with the elder, but when Iwas in the city I often visited him in his cell and confessed to him what had happened to me, although, withoutconscience as I was, I did not carry out any of his instructions. But now, as you see, the merciful God has forgivenmy many sins, and through that same saintly elder has granted me the grace to become a monk and - in spite of mybeing truly unworthy of it - has permitted me to be constantly with him. After .great labors and many tears,combined with strict solitude, total obedience, the complete elimination of my own will and many other rigorouspractices and actions, I have been going forward resolutely and unremittingly along my path, and have again beengranted a vision, faint as it is, of a small ray of that most gentle divine light, although up to now I have not beenprivileged to see it as I saw it on that original occasion.'

This and many other things he told me with tears. And I, hapless that I am, as I listened to his holy words realizedthat he was entirely filled with divine grace and was truly wise, despite his lack of worldly wisdom. Moreover, sincehe had acquired his unerring knowledge of spiritual realities through actual experience, I asked him to tell me howfaith could bring about such miracles and to instruct me by setting it

down in writing. He began to speak to me about these matters and was quite ready to write down his observations.Not to lengthen this present text, I have set forth what he said elsewhere for the delight of those who seek with Faithto learn from such writings.

Thus I beg you, brethren in Christ, let us also diligently follow the path of Christ's commandments, so that ourfaces are not covered in shame (cf Ps. 34:5). To everyone who knocks resolutely He opens the gates of Hiskingdom, and on him who asks He at once bestows the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 11:13). Nor is it possible for the personwho seeks with all his soul not to find (cf. Matt. 7:7-8)

and not to be enriched with the richness of His gifts. Thusyou, too, will be nourished by the inexpressible blessings that He has prepared for those who love Him (cf. 1 Cor.2:9). Here, in this present life, you will enjoy them in part, in accordance with His supernal wisdom; while in the lifeto come you will enjoy them fully, in company with the saints of all time, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom beglory throughout the ages. Amen.

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1. To have faith is to die for Christ and for His commandments; to believe that this death brings life; to regardpoverty as wealth, and lowliness and humiliation as true glory and honor; to believe that by not possessing anythingone possesses everything (cf. 2 Cor. 6:9-10) or, rather, that not possessing anything is to possess the 'unsearchable

riches' of the knowledge of Christ (Eph. 3:8); and to look upon all visible things as dross and smoke.

2. To have faith in Christ means not only to stand aloof from the delights of this life, but also to endure patientlyevery temptation and test that brings upon us distress, affliction and misfortune, for as long as God wishes and untilHe comes to us. 'I waited patiently for the Lord and He heard me' (Ps. 40:1).

3. Those who in any way esteem their parents above the commandments of God do not possess faith in Christ (cfMatt. 10:37). Their own conscience will certainly accuse them - if their conscience is still alive to their lack of faith.People who possess faith never transgress at any point the commandment of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

4. Faith in God engenders desire, for spiritual blessings and fear of punishment. Desire for spiritual blessings andfear of punishment induce a strict keeping of the commandments. The strict keeping of the commandments teachesus our own weakness. Awareness of our true weakness generates mindfulness of death. The person who is mindfulof death will insistently strive to discover what awaits him after his exit from this present life. But he who seeks toknow what is to come should first of all detach himself from the things of this world; for whoever is constrained byan attachment, however small, to these

things cannot acquire full knowledge of his post-mortal state. Even should God in His mercy give him some taste ofthis knowledge, it will be taken away from him unless he speedily severs his worldly attachments and dedicateshimself wholly to it, not willingly giving thought to anything extraneous to it.

5. The renunciation of and total separation from this world - which includes self-alienation from all materialthings, from the modes, attitudes and forms of this present life, as well as the denial of one's own body and will -swiftly brings great rewards whenever it is zealously accomplished.

6. If you are intent on renouncing the world, do not permit yourself the solace of dwelling in it for the time being,even if all your relatives and friends try to compel you to do so. It is the demons who provoke them in this way inorder to extinguish the ardor of your heart; for even if they cannot thwart your purpose completely, they will try toslacken and enfeeble it.

7. When you are courageously impervious to all the pleasures of this life, then the demons will promote in yourrelatives a spurious compassion for you, making them weep and lament over you before your eyes. You will realizethat it is spurious when you stick firmly to your purpose, for you will then see them becoming suddenly infuriatedwith you: they will no longer want to set eyes on you and will reject you as if you were an enemy.

8. When you see the pain which your parents, relatives and friends experience because of you, mock the demonwho in his subtlety has provoked these feelings against you. Withdraw with fear and determination, and entreat Godinsistently to bring you swiftly into His haven, where He will give rest to your tired and over-burdened soul. The seaof life nourishes many forms of danger and even of utter destruction.

9. He who would hate the world must love God from the depths of his soul and always have Him in mind;nothing else leads us to abandon the world more joyfully and to turn away from it as though it were so much trash.

10. Once called, do not seek to remain in the world for any reason at all, good or

bad; obey the call straight away.God rejoices at nothing so much as our promptitude; and swift obedience involving a life of frugality is better thanprocrastination amidst great wealth.

11. If the world and everything in it passes away, while God alone is[V4] 27

eternal and immortal, then rejoice, since for His sake you have renounced what is corruptible. Not merely wealthand possessions, but every sensual pleasure and sinful enjoyment are corruptive. Only the commandments of Godare light and life, and everyone acknowledges them as such.

12. If, brother, consumed by spiritual ardor you have entered a monastery or placed yourself under a spiritualfather, do not indulge in baths, food or other bodily consolations, even if urged to do so by your spiritual fatherhimself or by your monastic brethren. On the contrary, always be ready to fast, to endure hardship, to exercise theutmost self-control. If, however, your spiritual father insists that you should enjoy some comfort, you will obey him,not even in such a case acting according to your own will. But if he does not insist, then gladly endure what youhave freely chosen to do, and your soul will benefit. By keeping to this rule, you will find that always, in everysituation, you are abstinent and self-controlled, prompt to renounce your own will in all things. Moreover, you willkeep alight in your heart that flame which constrains you to stand aloof from everything.

13. When the demons have done all they can to shake our resolve to live a spiritual life and to hinder us fromcarrying it out, and have failed in their efforts, they enter pious hypocrites and through them try to obstruct us. First,as if moved by love and compassion, they exhort us to give our bodies some relaxation, on the grounds thatotherwise we will become physically exhausted and listless. Then they invite us to join in useless discussions,making us waste whole days in them. If we pay attention to these hypocrites and model ourselves on them, thedemons change tactics, mocking us for falling in this way; but if we take no notice of their suggestions, and holdourselves aloof from all, recollected and reserved, they are consumed with jealousy and do everything they can untilthey have driven us from the monastery. Arrogance cannot bear to see itself scorned and humility held in honor.

14. A man full of self-esteem suffers torture when he sees a humble person weeping and being doublycompensated: by God, who is moved to pity because of his tears, and by men, who are moved to give him praise thathe never sought.

15. Once you have entrusted yourself wholly to your spiritual father, you will find yourself alienated from allthings human, worldly or material, that might lead you astray. Without his consent you will

not have any desire to concern yourself with such things; nor wiU you ask him to allow you anything, great or small,unless he himself on his own initiative either tells you to take it or gives it to you with his own hands.

16. Without the permission of your spiritual father, do not give alms from the money you brought with you, anddo not even allow an agent acting on your behalf to distribute any of your wealth. It is better for others to regard youas poor and destitute than to distribute your wealth to those in need while you are still a novice. A person of purefaith will entrust everything to the decision of his spiritual father as if putting it into the hands of God.

17. Even if you are burning with thirst, do not ask for a drink of water until on his own initiative your spiritualfather urges you to drink. Constrain yourself, force yourself in all things, prevail over yourself, saying to yourself: 'IfGod wills. ..." And if you deserve a drink, God will certainly reveal this to your spiritual father and he will say toyou, 'Drink.' Thus you will drink with a pure conscience, even if it is not the correct moment to do so.

18. Someone with experience of spiritual grace and possessing an unadulterated faith once said, invoking God aswitness of its truth: 'I resolved never to ask for anythmg to eat or drink from my spiritual father, or to take anythingat all without his consent, but to wait until God prompted him to give me an order. Acting in this way, I neverdeviated from my aim.'

19. Whoever possesses unclouded faith in his spiritual father will, on seeing him, think that he is seeing ChristHimself; when with him or following him, he will firmly believe that he is with and following Christ. Such a personwill never want

to associate with anyone else, nor will he value anything in the world more than his thought of himand his love for him. For what is finer or more profitable in this world or in the next than to be with Christ? What ismore gracious or beautiful than the sight of Him? If someone is privileged to enjoy His companionship, he drawsfrom this eternal life.

20. If you truly love and pray for those who slander and maltreat you, who hate and defraud you, you will makerapid progress, for when your heart is fully aware that this is happening, your thoughts and, indeed, your whole soulwith all its three powers are drawn down into the depths of humility and washed with tears. This in its turn raisesyour intellect to the heaven of dispassion, conferring on it the

gift of contemplation. Because you have tasted such blessing, you come to regard all the things in this life as meredross, so that you do not even take food or drink with pleasure or any frequency.

21. The spiritual contestant must not only abstain from evil actions, but must also strive to be free from hostilethoughts and notions. He should always concentrate on ideas of a soul-nourishing and spiritual nature, thusremaining detached from worldly cares.

22. A person who strips his whole body bare, but keeps his eyes covered with a cloth, cannot see the light despitehis nakedness. Similarly a person detached from all things, including possessions, and even delivered from thepassions themselves, will never see the spiritual light - our Lord and God, Jesus Christ - until he frees his soul's eyefrom worldly concerns and evil thoughts.

23. Worldly thoughts and material concerns blind the mind, or eye of the soul, like a cloth that covers the physicaleyes: so long as we are not free of them, we cannot see. But once they are removed by mindfulness of death, then weclearly see the true light, that which illumines everyone who attains the spiritual world.

24. The person blind from birth will not recognize or believe the significance of what I have just written; but theperson privileged with sight will bear witness

that what I have said is true.

25. The person who sees with physical eyes knows when it is night and when it is day; the blind man is unawareof both. The person who has come to see with the eyes of the spirit, and who has beheld the true and quenchlesslight, is consciously aware when he is deprived of it should he return, out of laziness, to his former blindness; and hewill not be ignorant of why this has happened. But the person blind from birth, and remaining so, knows nothing ofthese things from personal experience of their operation. He knows about them only from hearsay, but has neveractually seen them; and if he tells others what he has heard, neither he nor his audience will know what he is talkingabout.

26. We cannot both sate ourselves with food and spiritually enjoy divine and noumenal blessings; the more wepander to the stomach the less can we experience such enjoyment. But to the degree that we discipline the body weare filled with spiritual nourishment and grace.

27. We should abandon all that is earthly. We should not only renounce riches and gold and other material things,but should also expel desire for such things completely from our soul We should hate

not only the body's sensual pleasure, but also its mindless impulses;

and we should strive to mortify it through suffering. For it is through the body that our desires are roused and stirredinto action; and so long as it is alive, our soul will inevitably be dead, slow to respond and even impervious to everydivine command.

28. Just as a flame always rises no matter in what direction one turns the wood on which it bums, so the heart ofan arrogant person cannot humble itself; the more one says to help him, the greater his self-inflation. Corrected oradmonished, he reacts violently; and when praised or encouraged, his exultation knows no bounds.

29. A person in the habit of contradicting others becomes a two-edged sword to

himself. Unwittingly he destroyshis own soul and alienates it from eternal life.

30. A contentious person is like someone who deliberately gives himself over to the enemies of his king.Contentiousness is a trap whose bait is self-justification; deceived by it we swallow the hook of sin. Then ourunhappy soul is caught, tongue and 'throat, by the demons. Sometimes they exalt it to the heights of pride andsometimes cast it down into the depths of sin, to be judged with those who have fallen from heaven.

31. A person who suffers bitterly when slighted or insulted should recognize from this that he still harbors theancient serpent in his breast. If he quietly endures the insult or responds with great humility, he weakens the serpentand lessens its hold. But if he replies acrimoniously or brazenly, he gives it strength to pour its venom into his heartand to feed mercilessly on his guts. In this way the serpent becomes increasingly powerful; it destroys his soul's

strength and his attempts to set himself right, compelhng him to live for sin and to be completely dead torighteousness.

32. If you want to renounce the world and to be instructed in life according to the Gospels, do not place yourselfin the hands of an inexperienced master or one subject to the passions; for then you will be taught, not the ways ofthe Gospels, but those of the devil. Good masters impart good teaching, but the evil teach evil. Bad seed producesrotten fruit.

33. Implore God with prayers and tears to send you a guide who is dispassionate and holy. But you yourselfshould also study the divine writings - especially the works of the fathers that deal with the practice of the virtues -so that you can compare the teachings of your

master with them; for thus you will see and observe them as in a mirror. Take to heart and keep in mind those of histeachings that agree with the divine writings, but separate out and reject those that are false and mcongruent.Otherwise you will be led astray. For in these days there are all too many deceivers and false prophets.

34. A blind person who undertakes to guide others is a deceiver plunging into the pit of destruction those whofollow him. As the Lord said: 'If the blind lead the blind, both wiU fall into the pit' (Matt. 15:14).

35. The person blind to the One is utterly blind to everything; but he who sees in the One contemplates all things.He abstains from the contemplation of all things and at the same time enters into the contemplation of all thingswhile remaining outside what he contemplates. Being .in the One he sees all things; and being in all things he seesnothing. The person who sees in the One perceives through the One both himself and all men and all things; hiddenin the One, he sees nothing of anything.

36. The person who has not consciously invested his intelligence and intellect with the image of our Lord JesusChrist, the heavenly one, man and God, is still but flesh and blood. He cannot perceive spiritual glory solely throughhis intelligence, just as those blind from birth cannot know the sun's light solely through their intelligence.

37. Whoever hears, sees and feels through his intelligence will know the meaning of what has just been said,because he already bears the image of the heavenly one (cf 1 Cor. 15:49) and has attained that perfect manhoodwhich is the fullness of Christ (cf. Eph. 4:13). Such a person can also guide God's flock aright in the way of Hiscommandments. But if someone does not understand what has been said, it is clear that the perceptive organs of hissoul are neither purified nor in good health, and that it would be better for him to be led than to lead others at theirperil.

38. He who looks upon his teacher and guide as if he were God cannot call him into question. If he thinks andsays that he can, he should know that he deceives himself, being ignorant of the attitude of holy men towards God.

39. If you believe that your life and death are in the hands of your spiritual guide you will never contradict him.Ignorance of this engenders contentiousness, and this brings about spiritual and eternal death.

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40. Before the accused receives his sentence, he is given an opportunity to speak in his own defense before thejudge about what he has done; but once the facts have been established and the judge has given his verdict, theaccused can say nothing, whether important or trivial, to those who execute his punishment.

41. Before a monk has entered this court and has revealed what he has in his heart, he may perhaps argue with hisspiritual guide, either out of ignorance or because he thinks he can keep things about himself hidden. But after hehas revealed and sincerely confessed his thoughts, he cannot argue with the man who, after God, will be his judgeand master until death. For when a monk has once entered this court and laid bare the secrets of his heart, he willknow from the start - if he has any understanding at all - that he deserves a thousand deaths. He will believe thatthrough humility and obedience he can be saved from all punishment and chastisement, if indeed he has trulygrasped the nature of this mystery.

42. If you keep these things indelibly in mind, your heart will never rebel when you are disciplined oradmonished or criticized. But whoever falls victim to the evils of contentiousness and disbelief with respect to hisspiritual father and teacher is while yet living dragged down pitifully into the depths of Hades. Being disobedientand a son of perdition he becomes the dwelling-place of Satan and all his unclean brood.

43. I exhort you, who are under obedience, to meditate on these things constantly and to make every effort not toplunge into these infernal evils of which I have spoken. Entreat God fervently each day with these words: 'God andLord of all, master of everything that has breath and soul, who alone canst cure me, hear my prayer, abject as I am.Root out of me and destroy through the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit the serpent that dwells in me. Make meworthy, poor though I am and bereft of virtue, of falling with tears at the feet of my spiritual father. Move his holysoul to have mercy on me; and. Lord, bestow humility on my heart and give me such thoughts as befit a sinner whohas resolved to repent before Thee. Do not abandon for ever a soul that has once submitted and has confessed toThee, that has chosen and honored Thee above all me world. Thou knowest that I wish to be saved, even if my badhabits hinder me. But to Thee, 0 Lord, are possible all things that are impossible to men' (cf Luke 18:27).

44. Those who with fear and trembling have laid a good foundation[V4] 33

of faith and hope in the court of devotion; who have planted their feet firmly on the rock of obedience to theirspiritual father; who listen to his counsel as if it came from the mouth of God; and who with humility of soul buildall this on the basis of obedience - such people will succeed immediately. They will achieve that great and primarytask of denying themselves. For to fulfill the will of another and not one's own entails not only the denial of one'sown soul, but also mortification towards the whole world.

45. The demons rejoice when a person argues with his spiritual father, but angels marvel at him when he humbles

himself to the point of death. For then he performs God's work, making himself like the Son of God who wasobedient to His Father unto death, the death on the cross (cf Phil. 2:8).

46. Contrition of heart, when excessive and untimely, troubles and darkens the mind, destroying the soul'shumility and pure prayer, and paining the heart. This induces a hardening to the point of total insensibility; and bymeans of this the demons reduce spiritual people to despair.

47. As you are a monk, such things may happen to you. If they do, you may still feel a great desire and eagernessfor perfection, longing to fulfill all God's commandments and not wanting to err or sin even by uttering a single idleword (cf. Matt. 12:36), or to fall short of the saints of old in the practice of virtue, in spiritual knowledge and incontemplation. But then you may find yourself hampered by someone who sows tares of despondency. He tries toprevent you from climbing to such heights of holiness by discouraging you with various thoughts. For instance, hewill tell you that it is impossible for you to be saved and to keep every single one of God's commandments whileyou live in this world. When this happens you should sit down in a solitary place by yourself, collect yourself,concentrate your thoughts and give good counsel to your soul, saying: 'Why, my soul, are you dejected, and why doyou trouble me? Put your hope in God. for I will give thanks to Him; for my salvation lies not in my actions but inGod (cf Ps. 42:5). Who will be vindicated by actions done according to the law (cf Gal. 2:16)? No living personwill be vindicated before God (cf. Ps. 143:2). Yet by virtue of my faith in God I hope that in His ineffable

mercy Hewill give me salvation. Get behind me, Satan (cf. Matt. 4:10; 16:23). I worship the Lord my God (cf. Matt. 4:10;Luke 4:8) and serve Him from my youth; for He is able to save me simply

through His mercy. Go away from me. The God who created me in His image and likeness will reduce you toimpotence.'

48. The only thing God requires of us is that we do not sin. But this is achieved, not by acting according to thelaw, but by carefully guarding the divine image in us and our supernal dignity. When we thus live in our naturalstate, wearing the resplendent robe of the Spirit, we dwell in God and God dwells in us. Then we are called gods byadoption and sons of God, sealed by the light of the knowledge of God (cf Ps. 4:6. LXX).

49. Bodily listlessness and torpor, which affect the soul as a result of our laziness and negligence, not only makeus abandon our normal rule of prayer, but also darken the mind and fill it with despondency. Then blasphemous andcowardly thoughts arise in the heart. Indeed, the person tempted by the demon of listlessness cannot even enter hisusual place of prayer; he grows sluggish, and absurd thoughts directed against the Creator of all things arise in hismind. Aware of the cause of all this and why it has happened to you, resolutely enter your normal place of prayerand, falling down before the God of love, ask with a compunctive and aching heart, full of tears, to be freed from theweight of listlessness and from your pernicious thoughts. If you knock hard and insistently, this release will soon begiven to you.

50. The person who has attained purity of heart has triumphed over cowardice. The person still in the process ofbeing purified sometimes overcomes it and sometimes is overcome by it. The person not even engaged in spiritual

warfare is either completely unaware that he is the ally of his own passions and of the demons and that he is sickwith pride and presumption, thinking he is something when he is not; or else he is the slave and servant ofcowardice, trembling like a baby and fearing fear where, for those who fear the Lord, there is no fear (cf Ps. 14:5.LXX) nor any occasion for cowardice.

51. Whoever fears the Lord will not fear the sickly attacks of demons or the threats of evil people. Like a flame ora burning fire, he goes about day and night through dark and hidden places, and instead of fleeing from the demonshe makes them flee from him, so as not to be scorched by the flaming rays of divine fire that pour from him.

52. Whoever goes in the fear of God is not afraid when surrounded by evil men, for he has the fear of God withinhim and wears the invincible amour of faith. This gives him strength to do all things, even those that seem to mostpeople difficult or impossible. Like a giant

among monkeys or a roaring lion among dogs and foxes, he is resolute in the Lord, unnerving his enemies with theconstancy of his purpose and filling their minds with terror; for he wields God's wisdom like a rod of iron (cf. Ps.2:9).

53. Not only the hesychast, living alone, or the monk under obedience, but also the abbot, the spiritual director ofmany, and even a monk charged with specific duties, need to be detached and completely free from all worldlycares. For if we are not detached, we transgress the commandment of God which says, 'Do not be anxious aboutyour life, what you will eat or drink, or what you will wear; for it is the heathen who worry about all these things'(Matt. 6:25, 32). And again, 'Take care that your heart is not weighed down by dissipation, drunkenness and worldlycares'(Luke 21:34).

54. A person full of anxiety about worldly things is not free: he is dominated and enslaved by this anxiety,whether it is about himself or about others. But he who is free from such things is untroubled by worldly concerns,whether they relate to himself or to others; and this is so, even if he is a bishop, abbot or priest. However, he will notbe idle, or neglect even the most insignificant and trivial details; but all he does he will do for the glory of God,accomplishing everything in his life without anxiety.

55. Do not pull down your own house because you want to build a house for your neighbor. Think howexhausting and difficult the task will be. Otherwise you may make your decision only to find that, having destroyedyour own house,

you lack the strength to build a house for someone else.

56. Unless you are completely detached from worldly affairs and possessions, do not voluntarily assumeresponsibility for such things. Otherwise you may become caught up in them and, instead of receiving the reward foryour services, may find yourself accused of theft and sacrilege. But if your abbot compels you to act as a steward, belike someone who holds in his hands a flaming fire; and if you ward off the attacks of your own evil thoughtsthrough repentance and confession, you will be kept unharmed through the prayers of your superior.

57. Unless you have become dispassionate you cannot know what dispassion is, and will not believe that adispassionate person exists anywhere on earth. For unless someone has first denied himself, readily giving his blood

for the sake of a life that is truly blessed, how[V4] 36

can he imagine that anyone else has done this in order to attain the state of dispassion? It is the same with someonewho thinks that he possesses the Holy Spirit while in fact he possesses nothing of the kind. When he hears about theworkings of the Spirit in those who do possess Him, he refuses to believe that there is anyone in our generation whois energized and motivated by the Holy Spirit, or who consciously and experientially enjoys the vision of Him, in thesame way as Christ's apostles and the saints from the beginning of the world. For each judges whether his neighbor'scondition is virtuous or vicious according to his own state.

58. A dispassionate soul is one thing, a dispassionate body is another. For the soul, when dispassionate, sanctifiesthe body with its own luminosity and with the radiance of the Holy Spirit. But bodily dispassion by itself confers nobenefit on the person who possesses it.

59. A person who is raised by the king from extreme poverty to wealth, who is invested by him with high officeand a splendid uniform and commanded to stand in his presence, will be full of devotion for the king and will reverehim as his benefactor. He will be fully aware of his splendid robes, of his high office and the wealth he has beengiven. Similarly, if a monk has truly withdrawn from the world and its affairs and has come to Christ, if he is fullyconscious of his calling

and has been raised to the heights of spiritual contemplation through the practice of thecommandments, then he will look unwaveringly on God and be well aware of the change that has taken place inhim. He will see the grace of the Spirit always illuminating him - the grace that is called a garment, the royal purpleor, rather, that is Christ Himself, if it is indeed true that those who believe in Christ are clothed in Christ (cf Gal.3:27).

60. Many read the Holy Scriptures and hear them read. But few can grasp their meaning and import. For somewhat is said in the Scriptures is impossible, for others it is altogether beyond belief. Some again interpret themwrongly: they apply things said about the present to the future, and things said about the future to the past or else towhat happens daily. In this way they reveal a lack of true judgment and discernment in things both human anddivine.

61. We, the faithful, should look upon all the faithful as one single being, and should consider that Christ dwellsin each of them. We should have such love for each of them that we are willing to lay down our lives for him. Norshould we ever think or say that anyone is evil:

we should look on everyone as good, as I have already said. Even should you see someone overwhelmed by somepassion, execrate, not him, but the passions that fight against him. And if he is mastered by desires and

prepossessions, have even greater compassion for him; for you too may be tempted, subject as you are to the samefluctuations of beguihng materiahty.

62. A person false through hypocrisy, or culpable because of his actions, or easily shattered by some passion, orwho lapses slightly through negligence, must not be left in the company of those who are working together inharmony. On the contrary he must be excluded from their society as still corrupt and reprobate. Otherwise at somecrucial moment he might break their chain of union, causing division where there should be none and distress bothto those who are at the head of the chain - for they will be grieved for those who follow after them - and to those atthe tail of the chain, who will suffer because they are cut off from those in front of them.

63. Earth thrown on a fire puts it out. Similarly, worldly concerns and attachment to even the smallest and mostinsignificant thing quell the fervor initially burning in our hearts.

64. If you are pregnant with the fear of death you will feel disgust for all food and drink and smart clothing. Youwill not even find pleasure in eating bread or drinking water. You will give your body only what it needs to keepalive; and you will not only renounce all self-will, but at the discretion of those to whom you are obedient you willbecome the servant of all.

65. The person who from fear of punishment hereafter has placed himself as a slave in the hands of his spiritualfathers will not choose, even if commanded to do so, relief for his heart's suffering or deliverance from the bonds ofhis fear. Nor will he listen to those who out of friendship, or flattery, or in virtue of their authority, encourage him toseek such relief and freedom. On the contrary, he will choose what increases his suffering and heightens his fear,and will look with love on whatever helps another to inflict these things on him. Moreover, he will endure as thoughhe never expected to be released; for hope of deliverance lightens one's burden, and this is harmful for someone whois repenting fervently.

66. Fear of punishment hereafter and the suffering it engenders are beneficial to all who are starting out on thespiritual way. Whoever imagines that he can make a start without such suffering and fear, and

without someone to inflict them, is not merely basing his actions on sand but thinks that he can build in the airwithout any foundations at all; and this of course is utterly impossible, indeed, the suffering is the source of nearlyall our joy, while the fear breaks the grip of all our sins and passions, and the one who inflicts these things brings usnot death but eternal life.

67. He who does not attempt to evade the suffering engendered by the fear of eternal punishment, but accepts itwholeheartedly, and even adds to it as he can, will rapidly advance into the presence of the King of kings. And assoon as he has beheld the glory of God, however obscurely, his bonds will be loosed: fear, his tormenter, will leavehim, and his heart's suffering will be turned to joy. It will

become a spring from which unceasing tears will flowvisibly and which will fill him spiritually with peace, gentleness and inexpressible sweetness, as well as withcourage and the capacity to submit to God's commandments freely and unreservedly. This is something impossiblefor those who are still- beginners, for it is the characteristic of such as are in the middle of their spiritual journey. As

for the perfect, this spring becomes a hght within their hearts, suddenly changed and transformed as they are.

68. The person inwardly illumined by the light of the Holy Spirit cannot endure the vision of it, but falls facedown on the earth and cries out in great fear and amazement, since he has seen and experienced something that isbeyond nature, thought or conception. He becomes like someone suddenly inflamed with a violent fever: as thoughon fire and unable to endure the flames, he is beside himself, utterly incapable of controlling himself. And though hepours forth incessant tears that bring him some relief, the flame of his desire kindles all the more. Then his tearsflow yet more copiously and, washed by their flow, he becomes even more radiant When, totally incandescent, hehas become like light, then the saying is fulfilled, 'God is united with gods and known by them', in the sense perhapsthat He is now united to those who have joined themselves to Him, and revealed to those who have come to knowHim.

69. 'Let no one deceive you with vain words' (Eph. 5:6), and let us not deceive ourselves: before we haveexperienced inward grief and

tears there is no true repentance or change of mind in us, nor is there any fear of God in our hearts, nor have wepassed sentence on ourselves, nor has our soul become conscious of the coming judgment and eternal torments. Hadwe accused ourselves and realized these things in ourselves, we would have immediately shed tears; for withouttears our hardened hearts cannot be mollified, our souls cannot acquire spiritual humility, and we cannot be humble.If we do not attain such a state we cannot be united with the Holy Spirit. And if we have not been united with theHoly Spirit through purification, we cannot have either vision or knowledge of God, or be initiated into the hiddenvirtues of humility.

70. Those who simulate virtue and who, because of the sheepskin of the monastic habit, appear to be one thingoutwardly but are something else inwardly - steeped perhaps in iniquity, jealousy, ambition, and foul pleasures - arerevered by most people as saintly and dispassionate; for in most people the soul's eye is unpurified, and so theycannot recognize these impostors by their fruits (cf Matt. 7:15-16). Those, on the other hand, who are full ofdevoutness, virtue and simplicity of heart, and who are truly saints, are judged by most people to be like other men;and they pass them by with disdain, counting them as nothing.

71. The garrulous and ostentatious man is thought by these people to be a spiritual master; but the quiet man,careful not to waste words, they regard as uncouth and inarticulate.

72. The arrogant, sick with diabolic pride, reject anyone inspired by the Holy Spirit as if this saintly man werehimself arrogant and filled with pride; for his words strike them like blows, yet do not move them to compunction.But whoever uses his inborn talents or education to spin long phrases, and who tells lies to people about theirsalvation, is welcomed by them and praised to the skies; and so no one among them is able to see the situation as itis and judge it accordingly.

73. 'Blessed are the pure in heart,' says God, 'for they shall see God' (Matt. 5:8). But purity of heart cannot berealized through one virtue alone, or through two, or ten; it can only be realized through all of them together, as if

they formed but a single virtue brought to perfection. Even so the virtues cannot by themselves purify the heartwithout the presence and inner working of the Spirit. For just as the bronzesmith demonstrates his skill through histools, but cannot make anything without the activity of fire, so a man using the virtues as tools

can do everything, given the presence of the fire of the Spirit; but without this presence these took remain uselessand ineffective, not removing the stain that befouls the soul.

74. Through holy baptism we are granted remission of our sins, are freed from the ancient curse, and aresanctified by the presence of the Holy Spirit. But we do not as yet receive the perfection of grace, as described in thewords of Scripture, 'I will dwell in them, and move in them' (2 Cor. 6:16); for that is true only of those who aresteadfast in faith and have demonstrated this through what they do. If after we have been baptized we gravitatetowards evil and foul actions, we lose the sanctification of baptism completely. But through repentance, confessionand tears we receive a corresponding remission of our former sins and, in this way, sanctification accompanied bythe grace of God.

75. Through repentance the filth of our foul actions is washed away. After this, we participate in the Holy Spirit,not automatically, but according to the faith, humility and inner disposition of the repentance in which our wholesoul is engaged. In addition, we must also have received complete remission of our sins from our spiritual father.For this reason it is good to repent each day, in accordance with the commandment that tells us to do this; for thewords, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near' (Matt. 3:2), indicate that the act of repentance isunending.

76. The grace of the Holy Spirit is given as a pledge to souls that are betrothed to Christ; and just as without apledge a woman cannot be sure that her union with her man will take place, so the soul will have no firm assurancethat it will be joined for all eternity with its Lord and God, or be united with Him mystically and inexpressibly, orenjoy His unapproachable beauty, unless it receives the pledge of His grace and consciously possesses Him withinItself

77. Just as an engagement is not binding unless the documents of the contract bear the signatures of trustworthywitnesses, so the illumination of grace is dependent upon the practice of the commandments and the actualization ofthe virtues. What witnesses are to a contract, the virtues and the practice of the commandments are to spiritualbetrothal: through them everyone who is going to be saved secures the consummation of the pledge.

78. It is as if the contract were written through the practice of the commandments and then signed and sealed bythe virtues. Only then

does Christ, the bridegroom, give His ring - the pledge of the Holy Spirit - to the soul that is His bride-to-be.

79. Before the marriage the bride-to-be receives nothing but the pledge given by her future husband; she waitsuntil after the marriage to receive the dowry that has been agreed upon and the gifts promised with it. So the Church- the bride-to-be composed of all me faithful - and the soul of each of us first receive from Christ, the bridegroom-to-be, only the pledge of the Spirit. The eternal blessings and the kingdom of heaven are given subsequent to thisearthly life, though both the Church and the individual soul have the assurance of them through the pledge they havereceived, in which, as in a mirror, what has been agreed is disclosed and confirmed by their Lord and God.

80. If the bridegroom-to-be is delayed abroad or kept away by other business, and puts off the marriage for awhile, and if the bride-to-be, indignant, rejects his love, erasing or tearing up the document that contains the pledge,she immediately loses all right to what she expected from him. The same is true where the soul is concerned. For if aperson engaged in spiritual warfare should say 'How long must I suffer?' and begin to evade the rigor of the asceticlife and, as it were, to erase or tear up the contract through neglect of the commandments and by abandoning theconstant task of repentance, then at once he forfeits completely the pledge given and his hope in God.

81. Should the bride-to-be transfer her love from the man to whom she is affianced to another, sharing his bed,whether publicly or not, not only does she not receive anything of what her betrothed had promised her, but she mayrightly expect the censure and punishment of the law. The same is true in our own case. If someone shifts the lovehe has for Christ, his betrothed, to the desire for some other thing, whether openly or in secret, and his heart ispossessed by mat thing, he will become hateful and abhorrent to Christ, and unworthy of being united with Him. Forit is written, 'I love them that love me' (Prov. 8:17).

82. Each of us should be able to understand from these signs whether or not he has received the pledge of theSpirit from Christ, our Lord and Betrothed. If he has received it, he should strive to retain it; and if he has not yetbeen privileged to receive it, he should strive through good works and actions, and through fervent repentance, toreceive it, and then to keep it through the practice of the

commandments and the acquisition of the virtues.

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83. The roof of a house rests on its foundations and walls; correspondingly the foundations themselves are laid inthe manner required for them to serve as support for the roof. A roof cannot stand without foundations, andfoundations without a roof serve no living or practical purpose. Similarly, God's grace is preserved through thepractice of the commandments, while the practice of the commandments is as it were the foundation for the divinegift. The grace of the Spirit will not remain with us without the practice of the commandments, nor will the practiceof the commandments serve any useful purpose without the grace of God.

84. A house left without a roof through the neglect of the builder is not only useless, but brings ridicule on thebuilder. Similarly, a person who has laid foundations through the practice of the commandments, and has raisedwalls through the acquisition of the higher virtues, remains incomplete, and an object of pity to the perfect, if hedoes not receive the grace of the Spirit in the form of contemplation and spiritual knowledge. He will have beendenied this grace for one of two reasons: either he has failed to repent; or, daunted by the serried ranks of the virtues

as by a boundless forest, he may have overlooked one of them - one that may seem trivial to us, but is indispensableif the house of the virtues is to be completed, since without it that house cannot be roofed by the grace of the Spirit.

85. The Son of God, God Himself, came down to earth in order to reconcile us. His enemies, to His Father, and tounite us consciously to Himself through His holy and coessential Spirit. How, then, can someone who lacks thisgrace of the Spirit achieve any other form of grace? Certainly he has not been reconciled to Christ, nor has he beenunited to Christ through participation in the Spirit.

86. The person who participates in the Holy Spirit is freed from impassioned desires and sensual pleasures, but heis not divorced from his natural bodily needs. In virtue of his deliverance from the bonds of impassioned desire andhis

union with immortal tenderness and glory, he strives unflaggingly to attain the heights, to dwell there with God,and not to lose even for a moment his vision of God and his insatiable delight. But because he is fastened to thebody and to corruption, he is dragged down and pulled along by them, and is turned towards earthly things. Hisdistress at this must be as great, I imagine, as that of a sinner's soul when it is separated from the body.

87. For someone who loves the body, mortal life, sensual pleasure,[V4] 43

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and the material world, separation from them is death; but for someone who loves holiness. God. the immaterialworld and virtue, true death is for the mind to be separated from them even briefly. If the eyes of a person who cansee sensible light are closed for an instant or covered by someone else, he suffers and is distressed and cannot bearit, especially if he was looking at something important or unusual. But if someone is illumined by the Holy Spiritand, whether asleep or awake, sees spiritually those blessings that 'the eye has not seen, and the ear has not heard,and man's heart has not grasped' (1 Cor. 2:9), and 'that angels long to glimpse' (1 Pet. 1:12), how much more will hesuffer and be tormented if he is torn away from the vision of these things? For this will seem to him like death, averitable exclusion from eternal life.

88. Many have called the eremitic life blessed, others, the communal or coenobitic life. Others again havedescribed in this way leadership of the faithful, or the counseling, teaching and administration of churches. All ofthese are activities that provide people with nourishment in body and soul. But for my part I would not judge anyone of them to be better than the others, nor would I say that one merits praise and another censure. But in everycase, whatever our work or activity, it is the life led for God and according to God that is most blessed.

89. Man's material life is based upon a variety of sciences and skills, each person practicing one or another ofthem and making his contribution. Thus, by giving and taking from one another, men satisfy their natural bodilyneeds. One can see the same thing among spiritual people, where one person pursues one virtue while anotherfollows another path. But all are moving towards a single goal.

90. The goal of all who pursue the spiritual path is to do the will of Christ, their

God, to be reconciled with theFather through communion in the Spirit, and so to achieve their salvation. For only in this way is the soul's salvationattained. And if it is not attained, our labor is fatuous and our work vain. Every path of life is pointless that does notlead the person pursuing it to this consummation.

91. The person who, totally forsaking the world, retires to the mountains as though in pursuit of stillness and whothen showily writes to those in the world, blessing some and praising and flattering others, is like someone who,after divorcing a foul and slatternly whore of a wife and going off to a distant land to expunge even his memory of

her, then forgets why he came there and longs to write to those living with that whore, and sullied by her, evendeeming them happy. If not bodily, at least in heart and in intellect he shares their passions, inasmuch as hedeliberately condones their commerce with that woman.

92. Those who purify their senses and hearts from every evil desire while living in the world indeed deservepraise and are surely blessed. Correspondingly, those who dwell in mountains and caves, but who pursue humanpraise and blessing, deserve censure and rejection. In the eyes of God, diviner of our hearts, they are adulterers. Forthe person who wants his life and name and ascetic practice to be known in the world prostitutes himself in God'ssight, as, according to David, the Jewish people once did (cf Ps. 106:39).

93. Whoever renounces the world and worldly things with unhesitating faith in God believes that the Lord iscompassionate and merciful and that He receives those who come to Him in repentance. But he knows, too, that Godhonors His servants with dishonor, enriches them with the utmost poverty, and glorifies them by means of insultsand scorn, making them through death participants and inheritors of eternal life. Through such trials the servant ofGod is impelled like a panting hart to the deathless fountain (cf. Ps. 42:1);

and through them he climbs upwards, as though up a ladder on which angels ascend and descend (cf. Gen. 28:12;John 1:51) in order to help those who are mounting. God is enthroned above, observing the strength of our intentionand

diligence, not because He enjoys seeing us struggle, but because He wishes, compassionate as He is, to give usour reward as if it were something He owed us.

94. The Lord never allows those who come to Him unhesitatingly to fall completely. When He sees themfaltering He helps them in their efforts, stretching a hand of power down to them and drawing them up to Himself.He works with them visibly and invisibly, consciously and unconsciously, until, having climbed every step of theladder, they draw near Him, wholly united with Him in His wholeness and forgetting all that is earthly. Whetherthey are there with Him in the body or out of the body, 1 cannot tell (cf. 2 Cor. 12:2); but they dwell with Him andenjoy His ineffable blessings.

95. It is right for us to place the yoke of Christ's commandments on our shoulders from the start; and we shouldnot resist or hang back. On the contrary, we should walk straight ahead wholeheartedly

obedient to them, making ourselves in truth the new paradise of God, until the Son comes to dwell in us with theFather through the Holy Spirit. Then, when He totally indwells us and is our master, whomever of us He commandsand whatever ministry He entrusts us with, we will take it in hand and carry it out sedulously, as seems best to Him.But we must not seek this ministry prematurely, or consent to accept it when given by men; but we must perseverein the commandments of our Lord and God and await His orders.

96. If, after we have committed ourselves to some form of ministry within the Church and have performed ithonorably, the Spirit should then direct us to some other ministry or work or activity, we should not resist. For Goddoes not want us to be idle, but neither does He want us to be confined for ever to the first work in which weengaged. On the contrary. He wants us to advance, moving always towards the realization of something better,acting in accordance with His will and not our own.

97. Whoever strives to mortify his own will should' follow the will of God; and in the place of his own will heshould put God's will, planting it in himself and

grafting it into his heart. Moreover, he should carefully observewhether what he has planted has put down deep roots, whether what he has grafted has healed over so as to make asingle tree, and whether it has grown and flowered and borne good, sweet fruit in such a way that he no longerrecognizes the earth into which the seed was sown or the stock onto which the graft was made, so incomprehensibleand miraculous is the life-bearing tree that has grown up.

98. If through fear of God you cut off your own will - inexplicably, for you do not know how this happens - Godwill give you His will. You will keep it indelibly in your heart, opening the eyes of your mind so that you recognizeit; and you will be given the strength to fulfill it. The grace of the Holy Spirit operates these things: without it,nothing is accomplished.

99. If you have received the remission of all your sins, either through confession or through putting on the holyand angelic habit, this will be a great source of love, thanksgiving and humility for you. For not only have you beenspared the countless punishments that you deserved, but you have been granted sonship, glory and the kingdom ofheaven. Bear this in mind and continually meditate on it, taking care never to dishonor Him who honored you andhas forgiven you ten

thousand sins; glorify and honor Him in all you do, so that in return He will glorify you even more - you whom Hehas honored above all visible creation and has called His true friend.

100. As the soul is more precious than the body, so man endowed with intelligence excels the whole world. Whenyou contemplate the grandeur of the created things with which the world is filled, do not think that they are moreprecious than you are; but keeping in mind the grace that has been given you, and aware of the value of yourdeiform soul, celebrate the God who has honored you above all visible things.

101. Let us consider how we should glorify God. We cannot glorify Him in any way other than that in which Hewas glorified by the Son; for in the same way as the Son glorified the Father, the Son in turn was glorified by theFather. Let us, then, diligently use these same means to glorify Him who allows us to call Him

'our Father inheaven', so that we may be glorified by Him with the glory that the Son possesses with the Father prior to the world(cf John 17:5). These means are the cross, or death to the whole world, the afflictions, the trials and the othersufferings undergone by Christ. If we endure them with great patience, we imitate Christ's sufferings; and throughthem we glorify our Father and God, as His sons by grace and as coheirs of Christ.

102. A soul not consciously and completely free from ties and attachments to the visible world is not able to

endure serenely the calamities and ravages with which both men and demons assail it. Bound by its attachment tohuman concerns, it is lacerated by the loss of material things, suffers when deprived of possessions, and is full ofdistress when its body is afflicted.

103. A person who has delivered his soul from its ties with and desires for sensible things, and has bound it toGod, will not only scorn property and possessions, accepting their loss painlessly, as if they belonged to others andwere not his own; he will also endure bodily distress with joy and gratitude. In the words of St Paul, he sees theoutward self perishing, but the inward self being renewed day by day (cf. 2 Cor. 4:16). Otherwise it is impossiblejoyfully to bear the afflictions permitted by God, for this requires perfect knowledge and spiritual wisdom. He wholacks these things walks at all times in the darkness of ignorance and hopelessness, totally incapable of beholdingthe light of patience and benediction.

104. Anyone who thinks himself intelligent because of his scholarly[V4] 47

or scientific learning will never be granted insight into divine mysteries unless he first humbles himself and becomesa fool (cf 1 Cor. 3:18), discarding both his presumption and the knowledge that he has acquired. But if he does thisand with unhesitating faith allows himself to be led by those wise in divine matters, he will enter with them into thecity of the living God. Guided and illumined by the divine Spirit, he will see and learn what others cannot ever seeor learn. He will then be taught by God (cf. John 6:45).

105. Those taught by God will be regarded as fools by the disciples of such as

are wise in the wisdom of thisworld. But in fact it is the worldly-wise that are fools, spouting an inane secular wisdom, the stupidity of which Godhas demonstrated (cf. 1 Cor. 1:20) and which Scripture condemns as material, unspiritual, devilish, filled with strifeand malice (cf. Jas. 3:15). Since these people are blind to the divine light, they cannot see the marvels it contains;they regard as deluded those who dwell in that light and see and teach others about what is within it. On thecontrary, it is they themselves that are deluded, not having tasted the ineffable blessings of God.

106. Even now, living in our midst, there are people who are dispassionate and saintly, filled with divine light;who have so mortified whatever in them pertains to the earth (cf. Col. 3:5), freeing it from all impurity andimpassioned desire, that not only do they themselves not think or act maliciously, but even when drawn in thisdirection by another they are unwavering in their dispassion. Those who accuse these saints of folly, and who do notbelieve them when in the wisdom of the Spirit they teach about divine matters, would have recognized them hadthey understood the sacred writings that are read and sung daily. For if they possessed a mature knowledge of theHoly Scriptures they would have believed in the blessings spoken of and bestowed on us by God. But because out ofself-conceit and negligence they do not share in these blessings, in their unbelief they slander those who do share inthem and who teach others about them.

107. For this reason those filled with grace and perfect in spiritual knowledge and wisdom will meet and seepeople living in the world only in order to benefit them in some way through reminding them of God'scommandments or by doing good; there is a chance that some will listen, understand, and be persuaded. For those

not led by the Spirit of God walk in darkness and do not know where they are going[V4] 48

(of. John 12:35) or what are the obstacles that make them stumble. Yet perhaps one day they may recover from theirpresumption and accept the true teaching of the Holy Spirit; learning about the will of God in all its purity andintegrity, they may repent, carry out this will and receive some share in spiritual grace. But if

these holy peoplecannot in this way benefit those living in the world, they return to their cells, lamenting the hardness of heart theyhave encountered; and they pray day and night for the salvation of such as are still in darkness. To those who dwellconstantly with God and are more than abundantly filled with every blessing, this is the only thing that causessadness.

108. What is the purpose of the Incarnation of the Divine Logos which is proclaimed throughout the Scriptures,about which we read and which yet we do not recognize? Surely it is that He has shared in what is ours so as tomake us participants of what is His. For the Son of God became the Son of man in order to make us human beingssons of God, raising us up by grace to what He is by nature, giving us a new birth in the Holy Spirit and leading usdirectly into the kingdom of heaven. Or, rather. He gives us the grace to possess this kingdom within ourselves (cf.Luke 17:21), so that not merely do we hope to enter it but, being in full possession of it, we can affirm: 'Our life ishid with Christ m God' (Col. 3:3).

109. Baptism does not take away our free will or freedom of choice, but gives us the freedom no longer to betyrannized by the devil unless we choose to be. After baptism it is in our power either to persist willingly in thepractice of the commandments of Christ, into whom we were baptized, and to advance in the path of His ordinances,or to deviate from this straight way and to fall again into the hands of our enemy, the devil.

110. Whoever after baptism deliberately submits to the will of the devil and carries out his wishes, estrangeshimself - to adapt David's words - from the holy womb of baptism (cf. Ps. 58:3). None of us can be estranged oralienated from the nature with which we are created. We are created good by God - for God creates nothing evil -and we remain unchanging in our nature and essence as created. But we do what we choose and want, whether goodor bad, of our own free will. Just as a knife does not change its nature, but remains iron whether used for good or forevil, so we, as has been said, act and do what we want without departing from our own nature.

in. To be merciful to just one person will not save you, but to scorn just one person will send you to the fire(cf.Matt.18:10). The words, 'I was hungry' and 'I was thirsty' (Matt. 25:35), were spoken with reference not merelyto a single occasion or to a single day, but to the whole of our life. Thus our Lord and God has declared that Heaccepts from His servants food, drink, clothing and so on, not once only but always and in all things.

112. Even though we may have been charitable to a hundred people, if there were others from whom we turnedaway when they asked for food and drink and we could have given it to them, we will be judged by Christ as havingrefused Him nourishment. For Christ, whom we nourish in the humblest of people, is in all those to whom werefused our charity.

113. He who today gives to all everything they need and tomorrow, though still in the position to act in a similarway, neglects some of his fellow beings and allows them to perish of hunger, thirst or cold, has scorned and allowedto die Him who said, 'Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these My kindred, you have done it to Me' (Matt.25:40).

114. Christ takes on the appearance of each of the poor and assimilates Himself to all of them so that no one whobelieves in Him will be arrogant towards his fellow being. On the contrary, he will look on his fellow being and hisneighbor as his God, regarding himself as least of all in comparison just as much with his neighbor as with hisCreator, honoring his neighbor as if he were his Creator, and exhausting his all in his service, just as Christ our Godpoured out His blood for our salvation.

115. We who have been commanded to regard our neighbor as ourself (cf. Lev. 19:18; Luke 10:27) should do sonot for one day only, but for our whole life. Similarly, we who have been told to give to all who ask (cf. Matt. 5:42)are told to do this for our whole life. And if we would like others to do good to us, we should ourselves act in thesame way towards them (cf. Matt. 7:12).

116. Whoever regards his neighbor as himself cannot bear to possess more than his neighbor. On the other hand,if he has more and does not give unstintingly until he himself becomes as poor as his neighbor, he fails to fulfill theLord's commandment. And if someone wishes to give to all who ask, but rejects one of them while he still has apenny or a scrap of bread, or if he does not act towards his neighbor

as he would like other people to act towards him, he too is failing to fulfill the Lord's commandment. Similarly ifyou provide for even the humblest of the poor, and give him drink, and clothe him, and so on, but ignore a singleperson whom you know to be hungry and thirsty, you will be regarded as having ignored Christ our God when Hewas hungry and thirsty.

117. This may seem extremely severe, and you may well say to yourself: 'Who can do all this? Who can care andprovide for everyone, and not ignore anyone?' But let us listen to what St Paul explicitly states: 'For the love ofChrist impels us to pronounce this judgment: that, since one has died for all, therefore all have died' (2 Cor. 5:14).

118. Just as the more comprehensive commandments contain within themselves all the more particularcommandments, so the more comprehensive virtues contain in themselves the more particular virtues. For he whosells what he has and distributes it to the poor (cf. Matt. 19:21), and who once and for all becomes poor himself, hasfulfilled at once all the more particular commandments: he no longer has to give alms to the person who asks himfor them, nor does he have to-refrain from rejecting the man who wishes to borrow from him (cf. Matt. 5:42). So,too, someone who prays continuously (cf. 1 Thess. 5:17) has in this act included everything and is no longer obliged

to praise the Lord seven times a day (of. Ps. 119:164), or in the evening, in the morning, and at noonday (of. Ps.55:17): he has already done all that we do by way of prayer and psalmody according to the regulations and atspecific times and hours. Similarly, he who has acquired consciously within himself the Teacher of spiritualknowledge (cf. Ps. 94:10) has gone through all Scripture, has gained all that is to be gained from reading, and willno longer have need to resort to books. How is this? The person who is in communion with Him who inspired thosewho wrote the Divine Scriptures, and is initiated by Him into the undivulged secrets of the hidden mysteries, willhimself be an inspired book to others - a book containing old and new mysteries and written by the hand of God; forhe has accomplished all things and in God, the principle of perfection, he rests from all his labors.

119. Emission of semen in sleep may be produced by many factors. It may be due to gluttony, or self-esteem, orthe envy of the demons. It may occur after long vigils when the body is sluggish and ready for sleep. It may happenbecause of the fear that it may happen, especially

if one is a priest due to celebrate the Liturgy, or intends to receive holy communion: filled with anxious thoughtsthat this might happen, one falls asleep only to have it happen. This, too, is brought about by the envy of thedemons. Or it may be that after seeing a lovely face during the day, one then recalls it mentally, and falls asleep fullof unchaste thoughts which one fails to repel because of one's sluggishness: thus one lapses while asleep, or evenwhile lying awake in bed. Or certain individuals - negligent, as 1 see it - may sit and talk, perhaps impassionately,perhaps not, about things involving the passions; then, when they go to bed, they turn those things over in theirminds, drop off to sleep while thinking about them, and come under their spell during sleep. It may even happenduring the conversation itself, one person being perverted by another. We should therefore always be attentive toourselves and reflect on the prophet's words: '1 have set the Lord always before me, because He is at my right hand,so that 1 shall not be shaken' (Ps. 16:8); and we should not listen to such talk. Often even those engrossed in prayerare physically aroused, as 1 have stated in the text on prayer.

120. Brother, at the beginning of your renunciation of the world, try hard to implant in yourself noble virtues, sothat you become useful to the community and so that the Lord may finally exalt you. Do not try to be familiar withthe abbot, as we have already said elsewhere, or request any honor from him. Do not seek friendship with the seniormembers of the community, and do not hang about their cells; for if you do, not only will the passion of self-esteembegin to take root in you, but you will be disliked by the superior. Why this is so will be clear if you think about it.Sit peacefully in your cell, whatever it is like. If someone wants to contact you, do not spurn him on the grounds thathe disturbs your devotions. Provided that you meet him with the consent of your spiritual father, you will come to noharm, even if the visitor has been sent to you by the enemy. But if you see that no good comes from the meeting,you should follow

the path that is of profit to you.

121. At all times you should fear God, and every day you should examine yourself to see what good things youhave done and what bad things. And you should forget what was good, lest you succumb to the passion of self-esteem. But where what was bad is concerned you should weep, confess, and pray intensely. This self-examinationshould

take place as follows: when the day has ended and evening has come, ask yourself how, with God's help, you havepassed the day. Did you judge anyone, speak harshly of anyone, or offend anyone? Did you look nnpassionately atanyone, or did you disobey your superior with regard to your duties and neglect them? Did you become angry withanyone, or occupy your mind with useless things while in church? Or, overcome by lethargy, did you leave churchor depart from your rule of prayer? When you see that you are guiltless on all counts - which is impossible, for 'noone is free from stain, not even for a single day of his life' (cf. Job 14:4-5. LXX), and 'who will boast that his heart ispure?' (cf. Prov. 20:9) - then cry out to God, full of tears: 'Lord, forgive me all my sins, in thought or act, consciousor unwitting.' For we offend in many ways, and do not know it.

122. Each day you should reveal all your thoughts to your spiritual father; and you should accept with completeconfidence what he says to you, as if it came from the mouth of God. Do not speak of any of this to anyone else,saying: 'When I asked my spiritual father such and such a thing, he said this or that; was that good counsel or not?And what should I do to heal myself?' Words like these display lack of trust in your spiritual father and injure thesoul. Mostly they occur in the case of beginners.

123. You should look on all who are in the monastery as saints and regard only yourself as a sinner and as theleast of all, thinking that on that day all will be saved and you alone will be punished. And when you are in churchreflecting about these things, weep bitter tears of compunction, taking no account of those who will be shocked bythis or mock such behavior. But if you see that as a result

of this you are slipping into self-esteem, leave the churchand weep in secret, returning as soon as you can to your place. This is particularly valuable in the case of beginners,especially during the six psalms, the psalter, the readings, and the Divine Liturgy. Be careful not to condemnanyone, but keep it in mind that all who see your distress will think that you are a great sinner and will pray for yoursalvation. If you think of this at all times and carry it out constantly, you will be greatly helped, attracting to yourselfGod's grace and becoming a participant in His divine blessings.

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124. Do not visit the cell of anyone except the abbot, and this rarely. Even if you want to ask the abbot aboutsome thought, do this in church. After the service return at once to your cell; from there go to carry out your duties.After compline, prostrate yourself before the abbot's door, ask for his prayers, and then, head down, hurry silentlyback to your cell. For it is better to repeat the Tnsagion prayer once with attention before going to bed than to pass afour-hour vigil in idle talk. Where there are compunction and spiritual grief, there is also divine illumination; whenthis is present in you, listlessness and sickness are dispelled.

125. Do not permit yourself to feel special love for anyone, in particular for a novice, even if his way of life

seems excellent, and much more so if it is suspect. Generally such love, even if initially spiritual, changes into animpassioned love, and results in useless afflictions. This tends to happen especially to those engaged in spiritualwarfare, as one may learn through humility and constant prayer. This is not the right occasion for me to speak aboutthese matters in detail, but he who has understanding will understand.

126. Be a stranger to every brother in the monastery - and even more to all whom you know in the world. Loveeveryone equally and look on all those devoutly engaged in spiritual warfare as saints. For those who are negligent,as we ourselves are, we must pray intensely; but nevertheless, as I said above, we should regard all as saints, andshould strive through inward grief to be purified of our passions, so that, illumined by grace, we may look on all asequals and

attain the blessing of those who are pure in heart (cf Matt. 5:8).

127. Brother, regard perfect withdrawal from the world first as the complete mortification of your own will; in thesecond place regard it as detachment from and abjuration of parents, family and friends.

128. In the third place you must divest yourself of all that belongs to you and give it to the poor, in accordancewith the words, 'Sell all you have and give it to the poor' (Matt. 19:21). Then you must forget all with whom youenjoyed a particular relationship of love, whether physical or spiritual.

129. You must confess all the secrets of your heart, all that you have done from your infancy until this very hour,to your spiritual father or to the abbot as if to God himself, the diviner of hearts and

minds. Do this in the knowledge that John baptized with the baptism of repentance and that all came to himconfessing their sins (cf Matt. 3:6). As a result of this your soul will experience great joy and your conscience willfind relief, in accordance with the words of the Prophet: 'First declare your sins, so that you may be set free' (cf. Isa.43:26).

130. Be fully persuaded that after your entry into the monastery your parents and all your friends are dead; andregard solely God and the abbot as your father and mother. Never ask anything of parents or friends on account ofsome bodily need. If in their concern they send you something, accept it and be grateful for their solicitude, but givewhatever they send to the guest-house or to the hospital. Do this with humility; for it is not a sublime but aninsignificant act.

131. Do everything good with humility, keeping in mind Him who said, 'When you have done everything, say,"We are useless servants; we have only done what was our duty" ' (Luke 17:10).

132. Take care never to receive communion while you have anything against anyone, even if this is only a hostilethought. Not until you have brought about reconciliation through repentance should you communicate. But you willlearn

this, too, through prayer.

133. You should be ready each day to receive all kinds of afflictions, regarding them as your release from manysins; and you should thank God for them. Through them you may acquire a close and unimpeachable communionwith God, in accordance with St Paul's words: 'Afflictions produce patient endurance; patient endurance, strength of

character; and strength of character, hope; and hope does not disappoint' (Rom. 5:3-5). For the things that 'the eyehas not seen, and the ear has not heard, and man's heart has not grasped' (1 Cor. 2:9) - these things belong, accordingto the infaUible promise, to those who, with the help of God's grace, patiently endure affliction. Without God's gracewe can of course do nothing.

134. Have nothing material in your cell, not even a needle, except for a rush mat, your sheepskin, your cloak, andwhatever else you wear. If possible, do not have a stool there. There is much to be said on this matter; but let himwho has understanding understand.

135. Again, do not ask the abbot for any appurtenances other than those prescribed; and take these only when hecalls you and himself gives them to you. Resist any thought of exchanging them for others. Accept them as they arewith thanksgiving, as if they had been given by

God, and manage with them. It is not permitted to buy others. You should wash your outer garment twice a year if itbecomes dirty; and, like some unknown beggar, you should ask your brother in all humility for something to wearuntil it has been washed and dried in the sun. Then you should return what you have borrowed with thanks. Youshould do the same with your cloak and any other clothing.

136. Perform the various duties assigned to you as well as you can; in your cell persevere in prayer withcompunction, attentiveness and constant tears. You should not think that because you have worked exceptionallyhard today you should reduce your prayer on account of bodily exhaustion. For however greatly

you exert yourselfin performing your duties, you should be aware that you have lost something of great value if you deprive yourselfof prayer. For this is in fact the case.

137. You should arrive first at the church services, especially matins and the Liturgy, and leave last, unless forcedto do otherwise.

138. You should be completely obedient to your abbot, from whom you received the tonsure, and should fulfillhis orders uncritically until your death, even if they seem impossible to you. In this way you will imitate Him whowas obedient 'to the point of death, even death on the cross' (Phil. 2:8). You should obey in everything not only theabbot, but all the brotherhood, and whoever is in charge of the various tasks that have to be done; and if you are toldto do something beyond your power, make a prostration and ask forgiveness. Should this be refused, remember that'the kingdom of heaven is entered forcibly, and those who force themselves take possession of it' (Matt. 11: 12); andapply force to yourself.

139. Whoever with a contrite heart prostrates himself before the entire brotherhood as a person of no account,utterly inconspicuous, a nonentity, and who lives in this way throughout his life, will receive, I declare, the gift ofinsight, and will foretell many things about the future with the help of God's grace. Such a person will also grievefor the faults of others; moreover, he will be undistracted by attachment to material things, since the intensity of hislove for what is divine and spiritual will not permit him to stumble because of them. There is nothing marvelousabout foretelling things of the future: often, indeed, it is prompted by the demons, as he who has understanding will

understand. But if a person begins to hear confessions, he may perhaps be deprived of these gifts, since he wiU thenbe busied with the examination of other people's thoughts. If, on the other hand, out of

great humihty he stops hearing confessions and giving counsel, he may again recover his previous gift of insight ButGod atone has knowledge of these things; as for myself, constrained by fear I dare not speak of them.

140. You should always direct your intellect towards God, whether asleep or awake, eating or talking, engaged inyour handiwork Or in any other activity. Thus you will fulfill the saying of the prophet, 'I have set the Lord alwaysbefore me' (Ps. 16:8). Reckon yourself a greater sinner than anyone else. For if you persist in this state ofrecollectedness, illumination will enter your mind like a ray of light. And the more you aspire to such illumination,attentive and undistracted, striving and tearful, the more clearly it will shine. When it shines, it is loved; and when itis loved, it purifies; and as it purifies, it makes one godlike, enlightening one and teaching one to distinguish goodfrom evil. But, my brother, much hard work is needed, and God's help, before this radiance indwells totally in yoursoul and illumines it as the moon illumines the darkness of the night. You must also pay attention to the thoughts ofarrogance and presumption which attack you, and not condemn anyone when you see him doing something wrong.For when the demons see the soul freed from passions and temptations through the indwelling of grace and theresulting state of peace, they attack it through such thoughts. But help comes from God. Let your inward grief becontinuous and your tears unquenchable. Yet take care not to harm yourself because of your great joy andcompunction: recognize that they are the result not of your own labor but of God's grace. Otherwise they may betaken from you and, when you urgently seek them again in prayer, you will not be able to recover them. You willthen know what a gift it is that you have lost. May we never, 0 Lord, be deprived of Thy grace.

Yet if this does happen to you, my brother, cast your weakness before the Lord and, standing up, stretch forthyour hands and pray, saying, 'Lord, have mercy on me a sinner, abject and weak as I am; and grant me Thy grace,not allowing me to be tested beyond my capacity. See, Lord, to what despondency and bad thoughts my sins haveled me. Lord, even if I wish to I cannot measure the loss of Thy benediction,' brought about by the demons and myown presumption. I know that the demons range themselves against those who zealously fulfill Thy will. But since Idaily do what they want, how is it that I am afflicted by them? I am tried constantly by my own sins. Yet now. Lord,if it is Thy

will and to my benefit, let Thy grace enter Thy servant once again, so that, aware

of it, I may rejoice with tears andcompunction, illumined by its eternal radiance. Guard me from unclean thoughts, from everything evil, from the sinsI commit daily in word or act, consciously or unwittingly. May I be given the confidence to call upon Thee freely, 0

Lord, from amidst all the afflictions that I suffer daily at the hands of men and demons; and, cutting off my ownwill, may I be mindful of the blessings stored up for those that love Thee. For Thou hast said. Lord, that he who asksreceives, that he who seeks finds, and that the door will be opened to whoever knocks'(cf Matt. 7 : 8). In addition tosaying these and other things that God puts into your mind, persevere in prayer, not allowing yourself to grow slackthrough listlessness. And God in His love will not abandon you.

141. Persevere until the end in the cell initially allotted to you by your superior. If you are troubled because of itsage or dilapidation, make a prostration before your superior and humbly mention the matter to him. If he hears yousympathetically, rejoice; if not, give thanks anyway, remembering our Lord who had nowhere to lay His head (cf.Matt. 8:20). For if you disturb the superior about this a second time, then a third and fourth time, insolence willresult, then lack of trust, and finally disdain. So if you want to lead a quiet and peaceful life, do not ask your superiorfor any bodily comfort. For it was not to this that you dedicated yourself when originally making your monasticvows; but you consented to be despised and scorned by all, in accordance with our Lord's commandment, and toendure manfully. If you want to maintain your trust in and love for your superior, and to look on him as a saint,make sure of these three things: that you do not ask him for any comfort; that you do not take any liberties whenspeaking with him; and that you do not keep visiting him, as some do, on the grounds that he helps them. This is notperseverance, but human failing. On the other hand, I do not condemn the practice of not hiding from him anydistractive thought that comes into your mind; for if you maintain this practice you will pass over the sea of lifesmoothly and will regard your spiritual father, whatever he may be like, as a saint. Should you approach him inchurch in order to question him about a distractive thought, but find that someone else has anticipated you for thesame purpose, or for some other reason, and that you are therefore ignored for a short while, do not take it amiss orthink anything hostile; stand by

yourself with hands folded until the other person has finished and you are called forward. The fathers often act inthis way, perhaps deliberately, testing us and releasing us from sins we have committed.

142. You should observe the great Lenten fast by eating every third day (not counting Saturdays and Sundays),unless there is a major feast. During the other two main fasts - before Christmas and before the Feast of theDormition - you should eat every other day. On the remaining days of the year you should eat once only, except onSaturday and Sunday and on feast days; but do not eat to repletion.

143. Strive to become for the whole community a good example of every virtue: of humility, gentleness, activecompassion, obedience even in the least of things, freedom from anger, detachment, unpossessiveness andcompunction, guilelessness and unmquisitiveness, of simplicity and estrangement from the world. Visit the sick,console the distressed, and do not make your longing for prayer a pretext for turning away from anyone who asks foryour help; for love is greater than prayer. Show sympathy towards all, do not be arrogant or over-familiar, do notfind fault with others, or ask for anything from the abbot or from those in charge of various monastic tasks; berespectful towards all priests, attentive in prayer, frank and loving towards everyone; and do not ransack theScriptures for the sake of glory. Prayer accompanied by tears and illumination given by grace will teach you how to

accomplish all this.

Whoever it may be who seeks your assistance and asks for your guidance, with great humility and self-effacement give advice as God's grace inspires you about the different forms of holy action, using your own life asthe model but referring to it as though it were that of someone else. And do not reject anyone who seeks your helpwith regard to some distractive thought, but listen to his sins, whatever they may be, weeping and praying for him;for this, too, is a sign of love and perfect compassion. Do not repel someone who comes to you on the grounds thatyou might be harmed by hearing what he has to say: with the help of God's grace, you will not be harmed in anyway. So that no one else may be scandalized, you should speak in some secluded place. Being human, you may

beattacked by some distractive thought; but if God's grace is present in you, such a thing will not happen to you. In anycase, we are

taught to seek not our own good but that of others, so that they may be saved (cf 1 Cor. 10:24, 33).

As we have already said, you should keep your life free from worldly concerns and possessions. You mayrecognize that grace is active within you when you truly feel that you are a greater shmer than all other men. Howthis happens, not I, but only God can say.

144. When keeping vigil you should read for two hours, pray for two hours with tears and compunction, gothrough whatever you choose of your own rule of prayer, and repeat, if you wish, the twelve psalms. Psalm 119, andthe prayer of St Eustratios. Do this when the nights are long. When they are shorter, abbreviate the sequence ofprayers and readings in accordance with the strength given you by God. For without Him nothing good isaccomplished: as the prophet says, 'The steps of a man are guided by the Lord' (Ps. 37:23. LXX). And our SaviorHimself has said, 'Without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

Never go to communion without tears.

145. You should eat what is put in front of you, no matter what it is; and take wine with uncomplaining self-restraint. If because of sickness you are having your meals by yourself, eat raw vegetables with olives. But if one ofthe brethren should send you something to eat, receive it with humility and thanks, as if you were a guest, and eatsome of it, whatever it may be, sending what is left over to another brother, poor and pious. Should someone inviteyou to a meal, partake of all that is put in front of you, but eat only a little, maintaining your self-control inaccordance with the commandment. Then, having stood up and bowed before him as though you were destitute anda stranger, thank him. Saying, 'May God give you your reward, holy father.' Be careful to say nothing else, eventhough it might possibly be of help.

146. If some brother, badly upset by the abbot, or the steward, or by someone

else, should come to you, encouragehim in this way:

'Believe me, brother, this has happened in order to test you; for the same thing has happened to me in various ways,and because of my

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faint-heartedness I was grieved. But once I realized that these things occur in order to test us, I have endured themgratefully. You should do the same now, and be glad for such trials.' Even if he then begins to abuse you, still do notturn away from him, but console him in whatever way God's grace enables you to do so. We have to distinguishbetween many different situations. According to your knowledge of your brother's state and his thoughts, talk tohim, and do not let him go away unhealed.

147. If one of the brethren falls ill and you visit him only after some time, first send him a message: 'Holy father,I learnt about your illness only today, and I ask your forgiveness.' Then go and see him; and, after making aprostration and receiving his blessing, say to him: 'How has God helped you, holy father?' Then, sitting down withyour hands folded, be silent. Even if there are others visiting him at the same time, be careful not to say anythingeither about the Scriptures or about his health, especially when not asked, so that you will not be troubledafterwards. For this is what happens generally to the more simple brethren.

148. If you are having a meal with your brethren, eat unhesitatingly of what is presented to you, whatever it maybe. If, however, you have been told not to eat fish or some other food, and it is offered to you, should the person whogave you the order be close at hand, go to him and request him to let you partake; but should he not be present, or ifyou know that he would not give his permission, and at the same time you do not wish to offend your hosts, tell himwhat you have done after you have eaten, and ask his forgiveness. If you are unwilling to do either of these things, itis better for you not to visit your brethren. For in this way you will be the gainer in two respects: you will escape thedemon of self-esteem, and at the same time spare them offence and distress. If the foods offered to you are on therich side, keep to your rule; yet even in this case it is better to

take a little of everything. In short, when you areinvited somewhere, apply the principle laid down by St Paul: 'Eat all that is set before you without raising questionsof conscience' (cf. i Cor. 10:25).

149. If one of the brethren knocks on your door while you are praying in your cell, open it for him and sit downand talk with him humbly, provided he proposes a topic of conversation that has some positive purpose. If he isdistraught, do what you can, through word or act, to rally him. But when he has gone, close your door and take up

your prayer again, and complete it. To comfort those who visit you is a form of reconciliation. But you should notact in this way with regard to non-monks; in their case you should complete your prayer and then speak with them.

150. If, while you are praying, you feel frightened, or hear some noise, or if a light shines around you, orsomething else happens, do not be troubled, but concentrate all the more fully on your prayer. Demonicdisturbances, alarms and excursions occur so that you will lose heart and give up your prayer; then, if this happens

regularly, you will fall into the demons' power. But if as you pray another light, beyond description, appears to you,and your soul is filled with joy, and you feel a desire for higher things, and tears of compunction flow, know thatthis is a divine visitation and succor. Should this state continue for a long time, recapture your intellect in casesomething more happens to you because of the anguish of your tears, and submit it to some physical activity,thereby humbling yourself. If it is your enemies that are trying to frighten you, take care not to abandon your prayer.Be as the child who, frightened by some hobgoblin, dispels his terror by flying into the arms of his mother or father:resort to God through prayer and you will find that you escape the fear which the demons provoke.

151. If, while you are sitting in your cell, one of the brothers comes to you and asks about carnal warfare, do notturn him away. But with compunction help him, using what God's grace has given you and what you have yourselflearnt through your own experience; and then dismiss him. As he leaves, however, make a

prostration before himand say, 'Believe me, brother, I have hope that through God's love this war you wage will end; only do not give in orrelax.' When he has gone, stand up, recall his struggle and, lifting your hands with tears towards God, pray with allyour heart for your brother, saying, '0 Lord God, who do not desire the death of a sinner, act as You know how andas will benefit this brother.' And God, who knows your brother's faith in you, and your compassion bom of love, andthe genuineness of your prayer on his behalf, will diminish this warfare for him.

152. All those things, brother, help you to acquire compunction. They should be carried out with a contrite heart,patience, and thanksgiving. They will cause you to shed tears, cleansing you of your passions, and will bring you tothe kingdom of heaven. 'For the kingdom of heaven is entered forcibly, and those who force themselves

take possession of it' (Matt. 11:12). If you can accomplish these things you will leave your former way of lifecompletely behind, and may even be freed from the attacks of distractive thoughts. For darkness gives way to light,and a shadow to the sun. But should someone at the start of the spiritual path neglect these things, growing sluggishin thought and full of curiosity, he will be deprived of grace. Then, falling a victim to evil passions, he will come toknow his own weakness and be filled with fear. Yet the person who successfully accomplishes these things shouldrealize that this is the result not of his own efforts but of God's grace. He should purify himself first, in accordancewith the saying, 'First purify yourself and then speak to Him who is pure.' For he who through many tears haspurified his intellect and has received the illumination of the divine light - light that would grow no less even ifeveryone received it - will dwell spiritually in the age to come.

153. St Symeon the New Theologian was once asked what a priest ought to be like, and he replied as follows:

'I am not worthy to be a priest; but I know very well what someone who is to celebrate the sacred mysteries ofGod should be like. In the first place, he should

be chaste, not only in body but also in soul, and he should be free ofall sin. Secondly, he should be humble both in his external manner and in the inner State of his soul. Then, when hestands before the holy altar, while gazing with his physical eyes on the holy gifts, spiritually - and with totalcertainty - he should perceive the Godhead. Moreover, his heart should be consciously aware of Him who isinvisibly present and dwelling in the gifts, so that he may offer the petitions with confidence; and when, like a friendspeaking to a friend, he says, 'Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name' (Matt. 6:9), the way in which

he recites the prayer will show that he has dwelling within him the true Son of God, together with the Father and theHoly Spirit. I have seen such priests. Forgive me, fathers and brethren.'

He also spoke the following words, as if about someone else, thereby concealing himself so as to avoid humanadulation, even though because of his love for others he felt at the same time compelled to reveal himself:

'A certain priest-monk, who had full confidence in me as his friend, once told me this: "I have never celebratedthe Liturgy without seeing the Holy Spirit, just as I saw Him come upon me when I was ordained

and the metropolitan said the prayer while the service-book rested on my head." When I asked him how he saw it atthat time, and in what form, he said: "Undifferentiated and without form, except as light. At first I was astonished,beholding what I had never beheld before; and as I was asking myself what it might be, the light said to me, its voiceheard only by the intellect: 'Thus have I appeared to all the prophets and apostles, and to those who are now thesaints and the elect of God; for I am the Holy Spirit of God.' " To Him be glory and power through all the ages.Amen.'

There are three methods of prayer and attentiveness, by means of which the soul is either uplifted or cast down.Whoever employs these methods at the right time is uplifted, but whoever employs them foolishly and at the wrongtime is cast down. Vigilance and prayer should be as closely linked together as the body to the soul, for the onecannot stand without the other. Vigilance first goes on ahead like a scout and engages sin in combat. Prayer thenfollows afterwards, and instantly destroys and exterminates all the evil thoughts with which vigilance has alreadybeen battling, for attentiveness alone cannot exterminate them. This, then, is the gate of life and death. If by meansof vigilance we keep prayer pure, we make progress; but if we leave prayer unguarded and permit it to be defiled,our efforts are null and void.

Since, then, as we said, there are three methods of attentiveness and prayer, we should explain the distinctivefeatures of each, so that he who aspires to attain life and wishes to set to work may with firm assurance select whatsuits him best; otherwise through ignorance he may choose what is worse and forfeit what is better.

The First Method of Prayer

The distinctive features of the first method of prayer are these. When a person stands at prayer, he raises hands,eyes and intellect heavenwards, and fills his intellect with divine thoughts, with images of celestial beauty, of theangelic hosts, of the abodes of the righteous. In brief, at the time of prayer he assembles in his intellect all that hehas

heard from Holy Scripture and so rouses his soul to divine longing as he gazes towards heaven, and sometimes hesheds tears. But when someone prays in this way, without him realizing it his heart grows proud and exalted, and heregards what is happening to him as the effect of divine grace and entreats God to allow him always to be engagedin this activity. Such assumptions, however, are signs of delusion, because the good is not good when it is not donein the right way.

If, then, such a person is pursuing a life of stillness and seclusion, he will almost

inevitably become deranged.And even if this does not happen to him, it will be impossible for him to attain a state of holiness or dispassion.Those who adopt this method of prayer have also been deluded into thinking that they see lights with their bodilyeyes, smell sweet scents, hear voices, and so on. Some have become completely possessed by demons and wanderfrom place to place in their madness. Others fail to recognize the devil when he transforms himself into an angel oflight (cf. 2 Cor. 11:14); and, putting their trust in him, they continue in an incorrigible state of delusion until theirdeath, refusing to accept the counsel of anyone else. Still others, incited by the devil, have committed suicide,throwing themselves over a precipice or hanging themselves.

Indeed, who can describe all the various forms of deception employed by the devil? Yet from what we have saidany sane person can understand the kind of harm that may result from this first method of attentiveness. Even ifsomeone who has adopted this method may perhaps avoid the evils we have mentioned because he lives in acommunity - for it is solitaries who are especially subject to them - none the less he will pass his entire life withoutmaking any progress.

The Second Method of Prayer

The second form of prayer is this. A person withdraws his intellect from sensory things and concentrates it inhimself, guards his senses, and collects all his thoughts; and he advances oblivious of the vanities of this world.Sometimes he examines his thoughts, sometimes pays

attention to the words of the prayer he is addressing to God, and sometimes drags back his thoughts when they have

been taken captive; and when he is overcome by passion he forcefuUy strives to recover himself.

One who struggles in this way, however, can never be at peace or win the crown of victory. He is like a personfighting at night: he hears the voices of his enemies and is wounded by them, but he cannot see clearly who they are,where they come from, and how and for what purpose they assail him. Such is the damage done to him because ofthe darkness in his intellect. Fighting in this manner, he

cannot ever escape his noetic enemies, but is worn out bythem. For all his efforts he gains nothing. Falsely imagining that he is concentrated and attentive, he falls victimunawares to self-esteem. Dominated and mocked by it, he despises and criticizes others for their lack ofattentiveness. Imagining that he is capable of becoming the shepherd of sheep, he is like the blind man whoundertakes to lead the blind (cf Matt. 15:14).

Such are the characteristics of the second method of prayer, and every one striving after salvation can see whatharm it does. Yet this second method is better than the first, just as a moonlit night is better than a night that is pitch-dark and starless.

The Third Method of Prayer

Let us now begin to speak about the third method of prayer, which is truly astonishing and hard to explain. Forthose ignorant of it, it is not only difficult to understand but virtually incredible, and there are very few to be foundwho practice it. It seems to me that it has deserted us along with the virtue of obedience. For it is the love ofobedience that delivers us from entanglement with this evil world, rendering us free from anxiety and impassionedcraving. It makes us wholehearted and unflagging in pursuit of our aim - provided, of course, that we find anunerring guide. For if through obedience you make yourself dead to every worldly and bodily attachment, how cananything transient enslave your intellect? If you entrust all the care of your soul and body to God and to yourspiritual father, no longer living for yourself or desiring the good opinion of others, what anxiety can distract 'you?

This third method, then, destroys the invisible wiles of the demons, with which as with ropes they seek to dragdown the intellect into all manner of devious droughts. Set at liberty, the intellect wages war with its full strength,scrutinizing the thoughts insinuated by the enemy and with masterful dexterity expelling them, while the heart in itspurity offers prayers to God. This is the beginning of a life of true seclusion, and those who fail to make such abeginning exhaust themselves in vain.

The starting-point of this third method of prayer is not to gaze upwards, to raise

one's hands aloft, to concentrateone's thoughts and to call down help from heaven. These, as we said, are the marks of the first form of delusion. Nordoes it begin, as the second method does, by keeping guard over the senses with the intellect, while failing toobserve the enemies who attack from within. In such a case, a person is struck by the demons instead of strikingthem; when wounded he is unaware of it; taken captive, he cannot retaliate against his captors. His enemiesconstantly attack him, from behind and even face to face, and fill him with self-esteem and arrogance.

If you desire to embark on this light-giving and joyful task, begin as follows. You must first practice exact

obedience, as described above, and so act always with a pure conscience; for without obedience it is impossible foryour conscience to be pure. And you must keep your conscience pure in three respects: first, with respect to God;second, with respect to your spiritual father; and third, with respect to other people and to material things. Withrespect to God you must keep your conscience pure by refraining from doing anything that conflicts with theworship due to Him. With respect to your spiritual father do everything he tells you to do, neither more nor less, andbe guided by his purpose and will. With respect to other people, you must keep your conscience pure by not doing tothem anything that you hate (cf. Tobit 4:15) and that you do not want them to do to you. With respect to materialthings, you must take care not to misuse them, whether food, drink or clothing. In brief, do everything as if you werein the presence of God, so that your conscience does not rebuke you in any way.

Having cleared the ground and indicated in a preliminary way the true character of attentiveness, let us now speakclearly and concisely about its characteristics. True and unerring attentiveness and prayer mean that the intellectkeeps watch over the heart while it prays; it

should always be on patrol within the heart, and from within - from the depths of the heart - it should offer up itsprayers to God. Once it has tasted within the heart that the Lord is bountiful (cf. Ps. 34:8. LXX), then the intellectwill have no desire to leave the heart, and it will repeat the words of the Apostle Peter, 'It is

good for us to be here'(Matt. 17:4). It will keep watch always within the heart, repulsing and expelling all thoughts sown there by theenemy. To those who have no knowledge of this practice it appears extremely harsh and arduous; and indeed it isoppressive and laborious, not only to the uninitiated, but also to those who, although genuinely experienced, havenot yet felt the delight to be found in the depths of the heart. But those who have savored this delight proclaim withSt Paul, 'Who will separate us from the love of Christ?' (Rom. 8:35).

Our holy fathers hearkened to the Lord's words, 'Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,unchastity, thefts, perjuries, blasphemies; these are the things that defile a man' (Matt. 15:19-20); and they alsohearkened to Him when He enjoins us to cleanse the inside of the cup so that the outside may also be clean (cf. Matt.23:26). Hence they abandoned all other forms of spiritual labor and concentrated wholly on this one task of guardingthe heart, convinced that through this practice they would also possess every other virtue, whereas without it novirtue could be firmly established. Some of the fathers have called this practice stillness of the heart, othersattentiveness, others the guarding of the heart, others watchfulness and rebuttal, and others again the investigation ofthoughts and the guarding of the intellect. But all of them alike worked the earth of their own heart, and in this waythey were fed on the divine manna (cf. Exod. 16:15).

Ecclesiastes is referring to this when he says, 'Rejoice, 0 young man, in your youth; and walk in the ways of yourheart' (Eccles. 11:9), blameless, expelling anger from your heart; and 'if the spirit of the ruler rises up against you, donot desert your place' (Eccles. 10:4), by 'place' meaning the heart. Similarly our Lord also says, 'Out of the heartproceed evil thoughts' (Matt. 15:19), and 'Do not be distracted' (Luke 12:29). And again, 'Strait is the gate andnarrow is the way that leads to life' (Matt. 7:14). Elsewhere He also says, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit" (Matt. 5:3);that is to say, blessed are those who are destitute of every worldly thought. St Peter says likewise, 'Be watchful, bevigilant, because your adversary, the devil.

walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour' (1 Pet. 5:8). And St Paul writes very plainly to theEphesians about the guarding of the heart, "We

do not wrestle against flesh and blood' (Eph. 6:12), and so on. Andour holy fathers have also spoken in their writings about guarding the heart, as those who wish can see forthemselves by reading what St Mark the Ascetic, St John Khmakos, St Hesychios the Priest, St Philotheos of Sinai,St Isaiah the Solitary and St Varsanuphios, and the entire book known as The Paradise of the Fathers, have to sayabout the subject.

In short, if you do not guard your intellect you cannot attain purity of heart, so as to be counted worthy to see God(cf. Matt. 5:18). Without such watchfulness you cannot become poor in spirit, or grieve, or hunger and thirst afterrighteousness, or be truly merciful, or pure in heart, or a peacemaker, or be persecuted for the sake of justice (cf.Matt. 5:3-10). To speak generally, it is impossible to acquire all the other virtues except through watchfulness. Forthis reason you must pursue it more diligently than anything else, so as to learn from experience these things,unknown to others, that I am speaking to you about. Now if you would like to learn also about the method of prayer,with God's help I will tell you about this too, in so far as I can.

Above all else you should strive to acquire three things, and so begin to attain what you seek. The first is freedomfrom anxiety with respect to everything, whether reasonable or senseless - in other words, you should be dead toeverything. Secondly, you should strive to preserve a pure conscience, so that it has nothing to reproach you with.Thirdly, you should be completely detached, so that your thoughts incline towards nothing worldly, not even yourown body.

Then sit down in a quiet cell, in a comer by yourself, and do what I tell you. Close the door, and withdraw yourintellect from everything worthless and transient. Rest your beard on your chest, and focus your physical gaze,together with the whole of your intellect, upon the centre of your belly or your navel. Restrain the drawing-m ofbreath through your nostrils, so as not to breathe easily, and search inside yourself with your intellect so as to findthe place of the heart, where

all the powers of the soul reside. To start with you will find there darkness and an impenetrable density. Later, whenyou persist and practice this task day and

night, you will find, as though miraculously, an unceasing joy. For as soonas the intellect attains the place of the heart, at once it sees things of which it previously knew nothing. It sees theopen space within the heart and it beholds itself entirely luminous and full of discrimination. From then on, fromwhatever side a distractive thought may appear, before it has come to completion and assumed a form, the intellectimmediately drives it away and destroys it with the invocation of Jesus Christ. From this point onwards the intellectbegins to be full of rancor against the demons and, rousing its natural anger against its noetic enemies, it pursuesthem and strikes them down. The rest you will learn for yourself, with God's help, by keeping guard over your

intellect and by retaining Jesus in your heart. As the saying goes, 'Sit in your cell and it will teach you everything.'

Question: Why cannot the monk attain perfection by means of the first and second form of keeping guard?

Answer. Because he does not embark on them in the proper order. St John Klimakos likens these methods to aladder, saying, 'Some curtail their passions; others practice psalmody, persevering most of the time in this; othersdevote themselves to prayer; and others turn their gaze to the depths of contemplation. When examining thisquestion let us use the analogy of a ladder. Now those who want to ascend a ladder do not start at the top and climbdown, but start at the bottom and climb up. They ascend the first step, then the second, and so the rest in turn. In thisway we can ascend from earth to heaven. If, then, we wish to attain the perfect stature of the fullness of Christ, likechildren who are growing up we must start to climb the ladder set before us, until progressing step by step we reachthe level of a full-grown man and then of an old man.

The first age in the monastic state is to curtail the passions. This is the stage of beginners.

The second rung or stage whereby a person grows up spiritually from adolescence to youth is assiduously topractice psalmody. For when the passions have been curtailed and laid to rest, psalmody brings

delight to the tongue and is welcomed by God, since it is not possible to sing to the Lord in a strange land (cf. Ps.137:4), that is to say, from an impassioned heart. This is the mark of those who are beginning to make progress.

The third rung or stage in life, marking the spiritual transition from youth to manhood, is to persevere in prayer.This is the stage of those who are already well advanced. Prayer differs from psalmody just as the full-grown mandiffers from the youth and the adolescent, according to the scheme that we are following.

In addition there is a fourth rung or stage in spiritual life, that of the old man with grey hairs. This signifiesundeviating absorption in contemplation, and this is the state of the perfect. So the journey is complete and the topof the ladder has been reached.

Since this is the way in which matters have been appointed and arranged by the Spirit, it is not possible for a childto grow up to manhood and to attain old age except by mounting the first rung of the ladder and so climbing up toperfection by the four steps in succession.

For someone who desires spiritual rebirth, the first step towards the light is to curtail the passions, that is to say, toguard the heart; for it is impossible otherwise to curtail the passions. The next stage is to devote oneself topsalmody; for when the passions have been curtailed and laid to rest through the heart's resistance against them,longing for intimate union with God inflames the intellect. Strengthened by this longing the intellect repulses alldistractive thoughts that encircle the heart, attempting to get in, and it rebuffs them through attentiveness. So itapplies itself assiduously to the second stage, that of attentiveness and prayer. This then stirs up the evil spirits, andthe blasts of passion violently agitate the depths of the heart. But through the invocation of the Lord Jesus Christthey are utterly routed and all the tumult melts like wax in the fire. But though they have been driven out of the heartthe demons continue to disturb the intellect externally through the senses. However, because they can only trouble itsuperficially, the intellect soon regains its serenity; none the less, it can never be completely free from the attacks of

the demons. Such freedom is to be found only among those who have attained fuU manhood - who are totaUydetached from everything visible and who devote themselves unceasingly to giving attention to the heart. After that,those who

have achieved attentiveness are raised little by little to the wisdom of old

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St Symeon the New TheologianThe Three Methods of Prayer

age, that is to say, they ascend to contemplation; and this is the stage of the perfect.

Thus if you practice all this in due sequence, completing each phase at the right time, your heart will first becleansed of the passions, and you will then be able to concentrate wholly on psalmody; you will be able to wage waragainst the thoughts that are roused by the senses and disturb the surface of the intellect and you will gazeheavenwards, if need be, alike with your physical and your spiritual eyes, and will pray in true purity. Yet youshould gaze upwards only occasionally because of the enemies that lie in ambush in the air.

God asks only this of us, that our heart be purified through watchfulness. As St Paul says, if the root is holy, soalso will the branches and the fruit be holy (cf Rom 11: 16). But if without following the sequence of which we havespoken you raise eyes and intellect to heaven in the hope of envisaging noetic realities you will see fantasies ratherthan the truth. Because our heart is still unpunfied, as we have said many times, the first and the second methods ofattentiveness do not promote our progress. When we build a house we do not put on the roof before laying thefoundations - this is impossible. We first lay the foundations, then build the house, and finally put on the roof. Wemust do the same in relation to spiritual matters. First we must lay the spiritual foundations of the house, that is tosay, we must watch over the heart and curtail the passions arising from it. Then we must build the walls of thespiritual house, that is to say, through the second form of attentiveness we must repulse the turbulence of the evilspirits that fight us by means of the external senses, and must free ourselves as quickly as possible from theirattacks. Then we must put on the roof, that is to say, detach ourselves entirely from all things and give ourselveswholly to God. In this way we complete our spiritual house in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory throughoutall the ages. Amen.

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Nikitas Stithatos

(llth century)(I'olume 4, pp. 76-174)

Introductory Note

Nikitas Stithatos, the disciple and biographer of St Symeon the New Theologian, is far less well known to usthan St Symeon himself.^ Bom around the beginning of the eleventh century, at an early age (c. 1020) Nikitasentered the monastery of Studios at Constantinople, and here he remained as a monk for the rest of his life, beingordained in due course to the priesthood. His personal contact with the New Theologian cannot have lasted verylong, for the latter died in 1022. Before his death St Symeon commissioned Nikitas to make copies of his writings;and some years later, as a result of a vision in which the saint appeared to him, Nikitas prepared an edition of

Symeon's works which was widely circulated. He acquired the sobriquet 'Stithatos', meaning 'the Courageous',because of his outspoken opposition during the early 1040's to the illicit relations of the Emperor Constantine IXMonomachos with his mistress Skliraina. At the time of the confrontation between Cardinal Humbert and PatriarchMichael Kiroularios of Constantinople in 1054, Nikitas wrote in defence of the Orthodox Church against the Latins.It is possible that he became abbot of the Studios monastery in his extreme old age, at some point in the period1076-92. The date of his death is unknown.

In addition to his polemical works against the Latins and his biography of St Symeon, Nikitas wrote theologicaltreatises on the soul, on paradise, and on the correlation between the angelic and the ecclesiastical hierarchies."The three Centuries of texts included in The Philokalia deal respectively, so the titles indicate, with the three mainstages on the spiritual way: the practice of the commandments (praktiki), the contemplation of the inner essencesof created things (physiki), and 'theology' or the knowledge of God (gnosis). Here Nikitas

' On the life and writings of Nikitas, see A. Solignac in Dictionnaire de Spiiitualite, xi (1981), cols 224-30.^ Edited by J. Darrouzes in Sources chretiennes 81 (Paris, 1961).

is following the classic triadic pattern devised by Evagrios of Pontos^ and used

by, among many others, StMaximos the Confessor." But in fact the contents of the Centuries do not correspond at all exactly to these titles,and Nikitas includes in each Century material relating to all three stages on the spiritual journey. While employingmost frequently the Evagrian-Maximian scheme, Nikitas occasionally combines this with the somewhat differentsequence proposed by St Dionysios the Areopagite, in which the three stages are described as the purgative, theilluminative and the mystical (III, 41-4). Elsewhere he adopts the threefold classification found in St Isaac theSyrian: carnal, psychic and spiritual (II, 3-7).

Although his style is more complex and his approach more abstract than are those of St Symeon the NewTheologian, Nikitas shares in common with his master many dominant themes. There are frequent references tothe divine light (II, 2, 5, 43, 45, etc.), but at the same time Nikitas places more emphasis than does his master uponSt Dionysios the Areopagite's symbolism of divine darkness (I, 1, 42; II, 50-1; III, 39, 53). Like St Symeon,Nikitas underlines the role of the spiritual father (I, 35; II, 10, 53-4) and maintains that a life of holiness is alwayspossible, whatever a person's outward situation; it is not necessary to withdraw physically into the desert (I, 72),for the true 'flight from the world' is the inner renunciation of our self-will (I, 2, 75-6). Faithful to the example setby the New Theologian, Nikitas insists that those initiated into the divine mysteries must then act as 'missionaries',telling others about the gifts of grace which they have received (II, 96; III, 13, 27-8, etc.); and he agrees with StSymeon the Studite that love for others is higher than prayer (II, 76).

One theme in particular that Nikitas derives from St Symeon the New Theologian is the vital significance oftears and compunction (katanyxis) within the spiritual life. The two are commonly mentioned together, although adistinction is also drawn between them (I, 71). A modem reader might easily assume that both of these things areprimarily negative and penitential in character, but this is to misunderstand Nikitas' viewpoint. Following St JohnKlimakos, ^ he

' See The Philokalia, vol. i (London and Boston, 1979), p. 57; and compare the Glossary, 'Contemplation'.

^ See The Philokalia, vol. ii (London and Boston, 1981), pp. 64, 90.

' See The Ladder of Divine Ascent, Step 1 passim, and also the Introduction to

the E.T., pp. 23-7.

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Nikitas StithatosIntroductory Note

is careful to distinguish two types of tears: those that produce 'an acrid and painful feeling', and the 'joyous tears' that are fullof'delight and a sense of jubilation'. The first are caused by repentance and inner grief, the second by compunction (I, 69-70).By the same token compunction has also a bitter-sweet character: it is linked with repentance and contrition (II, 92; III, 81), butat the same time it brings sweetness, joy and light, so that Nikitas speaks of the 'intoxication' and the healing 'oil' ofcompunction (II, 39, 68), and describes it as a spring from Eden, a shower of rain from the Holy Spirit (II, 44; III, 84.). Tearsand compunction, then, are caused not just by a realization of our own sinfulness, but also and much more fundamentally by agrateful and tender recognition of God's forgiving love.

In his basic approach, Nikitas Stithatos remains always positive, although never blandly optimistic. Our human nature isessentially good, and sanctity is nothing else than a return through grace to our natural state (I, 15; II, 12, 66). The materialworld is likewise intrinsically good and beautiful, and forms a sacrament of God's presence, a means of ascent to the divinerealm: 'Recognize the delightfulness of the Lord from the beauty of creation ... in purity ascending to the Creator through thebeauty of His creatures' (I, 74, 90).

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1. Those who have passed the mid-point of the first stage of the spiritual path, and who have attained the triad ofmystical theology, are prompted to write in a profitable manner by, it seems to me, four factors inherent in the faith,hope and love that constitute the perfect triad of the virtues. The first is the freedom - that is to say, the dispassion -of soul, which as a result of ascetic practice raises the aspirant to the contemplation of the spiritual essences of thecreated world and then inducts him into the divine darkness of theology. The second is the purity of intellect thatarises from prayer and tears, a purity that gives birth to the consciousness of grace and from which streams ofintellection flow. The third is the indwelling of the Holy Trinity within us, which produces in each of thoseundergoing purification the bountiful illumination of the Spirit, revealing to them the mysteries of the kingdom ofheaven and disclosing the treasures of God hidden in the soul. The fourth is the constraint which as a result of God'sthreatening words is imposed upon all who have received the talent of the consciousness of spiritual knowledge; forGod says, 'You wicked, slothful servant, you should have deposited My money with the bankers, and then when 1came 1 would have received My capital with interest' (Matt. 25:26-27). It was certainly because of this that David ingreat fear wrote, 'Behold, 1 will not seal my lips, as Thou, 0 Lord, knowest. 1 have not hidden Thy righteousnesswithin my heart; 1 have declared Thy truth and Thy salvation; 1 have not concealed Thy mercy and Thy truth from

the great congregation' (Ps. 40:9-10).

2. A life in harmony with God begins with complete flight from the world. 'Flight from the world' means thedenial of the soul's desires and the transformation of the mundane will. Reverting in this way to

the will of God, from being worldlings we become spiritual: dead to the fallen self and to the world, we arequickened in soul and spirit in Christ.

3. When a soul has true esteem for God, deeply-rooted faith combined with detachment from visible things, andan ascetic practice free from all self-love, it possesses, to use Solomon's phrase, a 'threefold cord' (Eccles. 4:12), noteasily broken by the spirits of wickedness.

4. In faith we hope to receive reward for our labors, and on this account we readily endure the hardship ofpracticing the virtues. But when we experience the pledge of the Holy Spirit, we are winged with love towards God.

5. To be troubled by unclean thoughts does not mean that we are already of the devil's party. But when the soulbecomes slack, when the intellect, because of our dissolute and unnily life, is filled with turbid and obscure images,and when our practice of the virtues lapses because of our laxity in meditation and prayer, then, even if not activelyengaged in evil, we are ranked among those who deliberately crawl in sensual pleasures.

6. As soon as the bridle of the higher senses is removed, our passions at once revolt and the baser, more slavishsenses are stirred into action; for when these latter in their mindlessness are loosed from the bonds of self-control,their habit is to light upon the sources of the passions and to feed on them as upon poisonous weeds. And the longerthe laxity continues, the more they do this. For such being their natural appetite they cannot refrain from indulging itonce they are free to do so.

7. Among the senses, sight and hearing possess a certain noetic quality and are more intelligent and masterful thanthe other three senses, taste, smell and touch, which are mindless and gross, and wait on the higher senses. For wefirst see and hear, and then, through the agency of the mind, we lay hold of what is before us and, smelling it, finallytaste it. Thus taste, smell and touch are more animal-like or, quite simply, baser and more slavish than sight andhearing. The more gluttonous and rattish animals, both tame and wild, are especially afflicted by them, and day andnight either fill themselves with food or indulge in copulation.

8. If you refer the activities of the outer senses back to their inner counterparts - exposing your sight to theintellect, the beholder of the

light of life, your hearing to the judgment of the soul, your taste to the discrimination of the intelligence, yoursense of smell to the understanding of the intellect, and relating your sense of touch to the watchfulness of the heart -you will lead an angelic life on earth; while being and appearing as a man among men, you will also be an angelcoexisting with angels and spiritually conscious in the same way as they are.

9. Through the intellect, beholder of the light of divine life, we receive knowledge of God's hidden mysteries.Through the soul's faculty of judgment we winnow in the light of this knowledge the thoughts that arise within theheart, distinguishing the good from the bad. Through the discrimination of the intelligence we savor our conceptualimages. Those that spring from a bitter rout we transform into sweet nourishment for the soul, or else we reject thementirely; those that spring from a virtuous and vigorous stock we accept. In this way we take every thought captiveand make it obey Christ (cf 2 Cor. 10:5). Through the understanding of the intellect we smell the spiritual unguentof the grace of the Holy Spirit, our hearts filled with joy and gladness. Through the watchfulness of the' heart weconsciously perceive the Spirit, who refreshes the flame of our desire for supernal blessings and warms our spiritualpowers, numbed as they have been by the frost of the passions.

10. Just as in the body there are five senses - sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch - so in the soul there are fivesenses: mtellect, reason, noetic perception, intuitive knowledge, and cognitive insight. These are united in threepsychic activities: intellection, ratiocination, and noetic perception. By means of intellection we apprehend spiritualintentions, by means of ratiocination we interpret them, and through noetic perception we grasp the images of divineinsight and spiritual knowledge.

11. If your intellect clearly distinguishes the intentions of its thoughts and in its purity gives its assent only tothose that are divine; if your reason can interpret the physical movements of the whole of visible creation - that is tosay, can clearly elucidate the inner essences of things; if noetically you can perceive heavenly wisdom and spiritualknowledge: then through the light of the Sun of righteousness you have transcended all sense-perception and haveattained what

lies beyond it, and you savor the delight of things unseen.

12. The intellect comprises four principal facilities: judgment,[V4] 82

sagacity, noetic apprehension, perspicacity. If you conjoin these with the four principal virtues of the soul, linkingrestraint of soul to the judgment of the intellect, sound understanding to sagacity, righteousness to noeticapprehension, and courage to perspicacity, you build for yourself a two-fold fiery heaven-coursing chariot that willprotect you against the three major principalities and powers of the mustered passions: avarice, self-indulgence andlove of praise.

13. To master the mundane will of the fallen self you have to fulfill three conditions. First, you have to overcomeavarice by embracing the law of righteousness, which consists in merciful compassion for one's fellow beings;

second, you have to conquer self-indulgence through prudent self-restraint, that is to say, through all-inclusive self-control; and, third, you have to prevail over your love of praise through sagacity and sound understanding, in otherwords through exact discrimination in things human and divine, trampling such love underfoot as somethingcloddish and worthless. All this you have to do until the mundane will is converted into the law of the spirit of lifeand liberated from domination by the law of the outer fallen self. Then you can say, 'I thank God that the law of thespirit of life has freed me from the law and dominion of death' (cf. Rom. 8:2).

14. If you aspire to the spuriousness of human praise as though it were something authentic, wallow in self-indulgence because of your soul's insatiability, and through your greed entwine yourself with avarice, you will eithermake yourself demonic through self-conceit and arrogance, or degenerate into bestiality through the gratification ofbelly and genitals, or become savage to others because of your gross inhuman avarice. In this way your faith in Godwill lapse, as Christ said it would when you accept human praise (cf. John 5:44.); you will abandon self-restraint andpurity because your lower organs are unsatedly kindled and succumb to unbridled appetence; and you will be shutout from love because you minister solely to yourself and do not succor your fellow beings when they are in need.Like some polymorphic monster compounded thus out of

multifarious self-antagonistic parts, you will be theimplacable enemy of God, man and the animals.

15. If when aroused and active a man's mcensive, appetitive and intelligent powers spontaneously operate inaccordance with nature, they make him wholly godlike and divine, sound in his actions and never in any waydislodged from nature's bedrock. But if, betraying his

own nature, he follows a course that is contrary to nature, these same powers will turn him, as we have said, intoa polymorphic monster, compounded of many self-antagonistic parts.

16. Our mcensive power lies between the appetitive' and intelligent aspects of our soul; for both of them it servesas a weapon, whether it is acting in a way that accords with or is contrary to nature. When our desire andintelligence, in a way that accords with nature, aspire to what is divine, then our mcensiveness is for both of them aweapon of righteousness wielded solely against the hissing serpent that would persuade them to indulge in fleshlypleasures and to relish men's praise. But when we fail to act according to nature and direct our desire andintelligence to what is contrary to nature, transferring attention from what is divine to purely human matters, thenour incensive power becomes a weapon of iniquity in the service of sin, and we use it to attack and fight againstthose who would restrain the passions and appetites of the other powers of our soul. Thus, whether we are engagedin ascetic practice or are contemplatives and theologians, when we act according to nature we prove; ourselves to beamong the faithful members of the Church, and when we act contrary to nature we become bestial, savage anddemonic.

17. Unless through the labor of repentance and assiduous ascetic practice we first restore the soul's powers to thestate in which they were when God originally formed Adam and breathed into him the breath of life (cf Gen. 2:7),we will never be able to know ourselves; nor will we be able to acquire a disposition that is master of the passions.

free from arrogance, not over-curious, guileless, simple, humble, without jealousy or malice, and that takes everythought captive and makes it obey Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 10:5). Nor will our soul be enkindled with God's love, nevertransgressing the bounds of self-control, but content with what is given to it and longing for the serenity of thesaints. And if we do not achieve such a state we can never acquire a heart that is gentle, peaceful, free from anger,kind, uncontentious and filled with mercy and joy; for our soul will be divided against itself and because of theturbulence of its powers will remain impervious to the rays of the Spirit.

18. If we do not regain the beauty of our original high estate, continually renewing the impress of the image ofHim who created us in His likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26-27), but instead distance ourselves from Him through thedisparity of our qualities, how can we ever enter

into union with Him? How can we enter into union with Him who is light when we have blotted out the light andhave embraced its opposite? And if we are not united to Him from whom we have received the source of our being,and through whom we have come into existence from things that are not and have been made preeminent over thingsthat are; and if, because of our unlikeness to our Creator we are severed from Him, where will we be cast? This willbe clear to those who can see, even if I am silent.

19. So long as we have the raw material of the passions within ourselves and, instead of repudiating it,deliberately nurture it, the passions will prevail over us, deriving their strength from us. But when we cast this rawmaterial out, cleansing our hearts with the tears of repentance and abhorring the deceitfulness of visible things, thenwe share in the presence of the Paraclete: we see God in eternal light and are seen by Him.

20. Those who have broken the bonds of worldly sense-perception are free from all servitude to the senses: theylive solely in the Spirit, communing with Him, impelled by Him, and brought through Him in some measure intounion with the Father and the Logos who are one in essence with Him; and so they become a

single spirit with God,as St Paul says (cf 1 Cor. 6:17). Not only are they exempt from the dominion of the demons but they actually fillthem with terror, since they share in the divine fire and are in fact called fire.

21. Our sense of touch is not partial in the sense that its activity is restricted to one part of the body, as is that ofthe other senses; it is a general, all-over sense belonging to the whole body. Thus if while still addicted to thelubricity of things we touch some object unnecessarily, passion-charged thoughts perturb the intellect; but if, afterrenouncing such addiction and rising above the realm of sense, we touch something in accordance with a needinherent in our nature, then our sense of touch has no tendency to seduce the soul's organs of perception.

22. When the intellect is established in the realm of what is beyond nature, the senses, assuming their natural role,commune dispassionately with the springs of the passions; they seek out only their underlying essences and natures,unerringly distinguishing their activities and qualities while not being addicted to them or adventitiously attracted bythem in a manner that is contrary to nature.

23. Spiritual struggles and labors generate gladness in the soul.

so long, that is, as the passions have been stilled; for what is difficult for those who are still dominated by thesenses is easy and even delightful for an aspiring soul that through its holly exertions has acquired a longing for Godand is smitten with desire for divine knowledge. For the sense-dominated, the labors and struggles for virtue,opposed as they are to bodily ease and indulgence in sensual pleasure, are difficult and seem very harsh, for in suchpeople the brackish taste of pleasure has not yet been washed away by the flow of tears. But the soul that abominatespain-inducing pleasure and has rejected comfort along with the self-love of the body, feels the need for andembraces such labor and struggles. One thing alone distresses it: slackness in its labors and indolence in itsstruggles. Thus what for those still dominated by the senses is the source of bodily content is for the soul that aspiresto what is divine a cause of distress. And what for the aspiring soul is a cause of spiritual gladness is for the sense-dominated the cause of pain and anguish.

24. Ascetic toil is initially painful for all those newly engaged in spiritual warfare; but for those exercised in thegrowth of virtue and who have reached the mid-point of their path, such toil is pleasurable and produces a strangesense of relief. When the mortal will of the flesh is swallowed up by the immortal life (cf 2 Cor. 5:4) conferredthrough the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in those truly striving towards the perfection of virtue, they are filled withunspeakable joy and gladness, for a pure spring of tears has opened within them, and streams of sweet compunctionflow down on them from above.

25. If you wish to advance to the frontiers of virtue and to find unerringly the path that leads to God, do not allowyour eyes to sleep or let your eyelids droop or give rest to your brow (cf. Ps. 132:4) until, with your soul riven bytoil and tears, you have attained the land of dispassion and have entered into the sanctuary of the knowledge of God.For then, aloof from all that is below, in your great thirst you will have climbed like a stag to the high mountains ofcontemplation and through God's personalized Wisdom you will have descried the ultimate reaches of human life.

26. For those newly engaged in spiritual warfare the swift path to the recovery of virtue consists in the silencing ofthe lips, the closure of the eyes and the stopping of the ears; for once the intellect has achieved this kind ofintermission and has sealed off the external entrances to itself, it begins to understand itself and its own activities.

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Nikitas Stithatos

On the Practice of the Virtues:One Hundred Texts

It immediately sets about interrogating the ideas swimming in the noetic sea of its thought, trying to discernwhether the concepts that irrupt into the mind's crucible are pure, alloyed with no bitter seed, and conferred by anangel of light, or whether they are tares, hybridized, trashy, emanating from the devil. Standing thus like a masterful

sovereign in the midst of its thoughts, judging them and separating the better from the worse, the intellect acceptsthose that are well-tested in the fire of the Spirit and saturated with divine water, absorbing them into its actions andpractice and storing them up in its spiritual treasure-house; for by these

thoughts it is nourished, strengthened andfilled with light. The other thoughts it casts into the depths of oblivion, eradicating their bitterness. This is the workonly of someone who has spiritually embarked upon the path that leads unerringly to the heavens and to God, andwho has stripped off the lugubrious cloak of the dark passions.

27. Once the soul has divested itself of malice and of its futile propensity to cheap arrogance, and through theindwelling of the Paraclete has adorned the heart with simplicity and innocence, it will immediately be restored toGod and to itself And since it has now passed beyond the hellish pits of incredulity and malevolence, it willunhesitatingly accept what it hears and sees as trustworthy and true.

28. Deep-rooted faith is pre-eminent among the virtues, since such faith strips the soul of doubt and rids itcompletely of self-love. For nothing so prevents someone newly engaged in spiritual warfare from practicing thecommandments as this pernicious vice of self-love. It even prevents the progress of those well advanced on thespiritual path, for it suggests illnesses to them and malignant bodily ailments, so that their ardor wanes and they arepersuaded to give up ascetic toil on the grounds that in their susceptible state it is dangerous. Self-love is inane amityfor the body, which ends by making the monk a lover of himself - of his own soul and body - and so estranges himfrom God and from God's kingdom, in accordance with the gospel phrase, 'He who loves his life will destroy it'(John 12:25).

29. He who diligently begins to practice God's commandments, and with ardent longing shoulders the light yokeof asceticism (cf Matt. 11:30), does not spare his body's health, or flinch at virtue's harsh demands, or shrink fromexertion, or heed the laziness and negligence of others. Rather, whatever the hardship, he fervently ploughs thefurrow of the virtues, attending only to himself and to the

commandments of God. Each day with tears he tills and sows the land of the living (cf. Ps. 126:5) until the firstshoots of dispassion germinate within him, wax into divine knowledge, bear the grain of the Logos and fructify inHis

righteousness.

30. Nothing, I think, so promotes the soul's swift progress as faith - not just faith in God and in His only-begottenSon, but faith that is deeply rooted. With this faith we believe in the truth of Christ's promises, made and kept inreadiness for those who love Him (cf. 1 Cor. 2:19), just as we also believe in the truth of the threats and the infernalpunishments prepared for the devil and his accomplices (cf. Matt. 25:41). This faith inspires the striving soul withthe hope that it will attain the state of the saints, their blessed dispassion, climbing the heights of their holiness andbecoming a coheir with them of God's kingdom. With such assurance the soul assiduously and unwaveringlyaugments its practice of the commandments, imitating the labors of the saints and pursuing their perfection bymeans of similar struggles.

31. The external appearance of the face changes in accordance with the inner state of the soul: whatever the soul'snoetic activity, it will be reflected in the face. Disposed and changed according to the thoughts within the soul, theface brightens when the heart rejoices in the upsurge of good thoughts and in its meditation on God, but is downcastand glum when the heart is embittered by unnatural thoughts. In both cases, what is happening is quite evident tothose in whom the soul's organs of perception are well trained. Either it is a change brought about by 'the right handof the Most High' (Ps. 77:10. LXX), and this is obvious to them because it is something familiar and dear to themwhereby they are reborn in the Spirit and become light and salt to others near them (cf. Matt. 5:13-14); or else is achange brought about by the discord of evil powers and the tumult of our thoughts, and this too is evident to them,since they resist such change, the impress of the image of the Son of God within them having been burnished to thehighest degree by the rays of divine grace.

32. A soul receives either blessings or penalties and punishment according to its inner activities. If it concernsitself with things divine and tills the ground of humility, tears fall on it like rain from heaven, and it cultivates lovefor God, faith and compassion for others. And when in this way the soul is renewed in the beauty of Christ's image,it becomes a light to others; attracting their attention with the rays of its virtue, it inspires them to glorify God. But ifthe soul devotes itself to

mundane and merely human matters, stirring and agitating the fetid waters of sin, it nourishes hatred and repelswhat is good and beautiful. Deformed in this way according to the mundane, ugly image of fallen man, it becomes athing of darkness to others; and through its evil talk and depravity it corrupts immature and fickle souls, inducingthem to blaspheme God. Thus the soul receives its reward according to the state it is in when death overtakes it.

33. If you husband evil thoughts your face will be morose and sullen; your tongue will be incapable of praisingGod and you will be surly towards others. But if you husband in your heart what is deathless and holy, your facewill radiate joy and gladness, you will lift up your voice in prayer and be most gentle in speech. Thus it will be quiteclear to all whether you are still subject to unclean passions and to the law of the mundane will, or whether you arefree from such servitude and live according to the law of the Spirit. In the words of Solomon, 'A glad heart makesthe face radiant; but a doleful heart makes it sullen' (cf. Prov. 15:13).

34. Passions acted out can be cured by action. Dissipation, sensuality, gluttony and a dissolute, profligate lifeproduce a passion-charged state of soul and impel it to unnatural actions. On the other hand, restraint and self-control, ascetic labor and spiritual struggle translate the soul from its passion-charged state to a state of dispassion.

35. If after strenuous ascetic labor you receive great gifts from God on account of your humility, but are thendragged down and handed over to the passions and to the chastisement of the demons, you must know that you haveexalted yourself, have thought much of yourself, and have disparaged others. And you will find no cure for orrelease from the passions and demons that afflict you unless you make use of a good mediator and through humilityand awareness of your limitations you repent and return to your original state. Such humility and self-knowledgelead all who are firmly rooted in virtue to look upon themselves as the lowest of created things.

36. In the eyes of God and of those who hve a Christ-hke hfe, to act with passion because of one's dissolutecharacter and to take pride in one's virtues through a

spirit of self-conceit are each as evil as the other. In the firstcase it is shameful even to speak of the things that those enslaved to the passions do in secret (cf Eph. 5:12); in thesecond case the self-vaunting of the heart is an abomination to God. The dissolute person alienates himself fromGod, for he is 'flesh' (cf Gen. 6:3),

while the person who takes pride in his virtue is unclean in God's sight because of his self-conceit.

37. A passion is not the same thing as a sinful act: they are quite distinct. A passion operates in the soul, a sinfulact involves the body. For example, love of pleasure, avarice and love of praise are three particularly noxiouspassions of the soul; but unchastity, greed and wrong-doing are sinful acts of the flesh. Lust anger and arrogance arepassions of the soul produced when the soul's powers operate in a way that is contrary to nature. Adultery, murder,theft, drunkenness and whatever else is done through the body, are smful and noxious actions of the flesh.

38. The three most general passions are self-indulgence, avarice and love of praise; and three are the ranks of menthat fight against them and overcome them: those newly embarked on the spiritual path, those in mid-course, andthose who have attamed its goal.

39. The battle waged by those in the three stages of the spiritual path against these three principles and powers ofthe prince of this world is not one and the same, but at each stage the battle is different. At each stage there is adifferent way of fighting against these passions, and each way makes lawful and natural use of the power ofrighteous indignation.

40. If it is but recently that you have embarked on the struggle for holiness and ranked yourself against thepassions, you must battle unremittingly and through every kind of ascetic hardship against the spirit of self-indulgence. You must waste your flesh through fasting, sleeping on the ground, vigils and night-long prayer; youmust bring your soul into a state of contrition through thinking on the

torments of hell and through meditation ondeath; and you must through tears of repentance purge your heart of all the defilement that comes from couplingwith impure thoughts and giving your assent to them.

41. When you approach the mid-point of the initial stage of the spiritual path you will experience the first form ofdispassion, and through it the strain of your exertions against the spirit of self-indulgence will be eased. Your eyesopened, you will begin to perceive the inner nature of things, and will now take up the weapons of faith against thespirit of perfidious avarice. You will exalt your intellect through meditation on things divine and quicken yourthought with the inner essences of the created world, elucidating their true nature.

In faith you will lead your soul from what is visible to the heights of the invisible, assured that God, who bringsall things from non-existence into existence, provides for all that He has created. In this way your whole aspirationwill be directed towards life in God.

42. When through contemplation and dispassion you have passed the half-way mark of the spiritual journey andhave transcended the deceitfulness of worldly sense-perception, you will now enter the divine darkness of theology,guided by the consciousness of spiritual knowledge and by God's personalized Wisdom. It is at this point that withthe strength of humility you raise your weapons against the spirit of self-glory and the love of praise. Your soul willbe spurred by holy revelations and painlessly you will pour forth tears; you will be humbled in your will through therecognition of human weakness, and exalted by intimations of divine knowledge.

43. By means of fasting, vigils, prayer, sleeping on the ground, bodily labors and the amputation of our desiresthrough humility of soul, we inactivate the spirit of self-indulgence. We overcome it through tears of repentanceand, shackling it with self-control, render it immobile and ineffective; for we are now among those proficient inspiritual warfare.

44. Repulsing and finally slaying the spirit of avarice with the weapons of faith

and 'the sword of the Spirit, whichis the word of God' (Eph. 6:17), we now approach, thanks to the consciousness of Wisdom, the contemplation of theinner essences of created beings. Illumined with the consciousness of spiritual knowledge, we pass beyond the lowlyregion of visible things and attain the realms of love, rich in God-inspired hope.

45. Winged by dispassion and humility, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, we enter the sphere of mystical theologyand the abyss of the knowledge of God's mysteries. The spirit of self-gloiy is now consumed in the lightning ofdivine thought and doctrine. Weeping and filled with compunction we perceive the consummation of things human,and scatter that spirit's minions, who attack us through presumption, self-esteem and arrogance.

46. He who wholeheartedly hates and renounces 'the desire of the fallen self, the desire of the eyes, and the falsepretentions of this life' (1 John 2:16) - that whole 'world of iniquity' (Jas. 3:6) through the love of which we becomethe enemies of God (cf Jas. 4:4) - has crucified the world to himself and himself to the world: he has

destroyed in his flesh the enmity between God and his soul, and has made peace between the two (cf Eph. 2:15).For he who has died to these things through effacing the will of the flesh has reconciled himself to God. He haseradicated the enmity of this world by obliterating sensual pleasure through a life crucified to the world, and hasembraced friendship with Jesus. He is no longer God's enemy because of his love for the world, but is a friend ofGod, crucified to the world and able to say, 'The world is crucified to me, and I to the world' (Gal. 6:14).

47. God deserts those engaged in spiritual warfare for three reasons: because of their arrogance, because they

censure others, and because they are so cock-a-hoop about their own virtue. The presence of any of these vices inthe soul prompts God to withdraw; and until they are expelled and replaced by radical humility, the soul will notescape just punishment.

48. It is not only passion-charged thoughts that sully the heart and defile the soul. To be elated about one's manyachievements, to be puffed up about one's virtue, to have a high idea of one's wisdom and spiritual knowledge, andto criticize those who are lazy and negligent - all this has the same effect, as is clear from the parable of the publicanand the Pharisee (cf Luke 18:10-14).

49. Do not imagine that you will be delivered from your passions, or escape the defilement of the passion-chargedthoughts which these generate, while your mind is still swollen with pride because of your virtues. You will not seethe courts of peace, your thoughts full of loving-kindness, nor, generous and calm in heart, will you joyfully enterthe temple of love, so long as you presume on yourself and on your own works.

50. If your soul is allured by comeliness of body and usurped by the passion-imbued thoughts that it seems toevoke, do not assume that such comeliness is the cause of your agitated and impassioned state. The cause lies hiddenin your soul, and it is your soul's passionate disposition and evil habits that, as a magnet attracts iron, attracts to itselfsuch impurity from the beauty it perceives. For all things are created by God and all, as He Himself says, are 'whollygood and beautiful' (Gen. 1:31), providing no ground at all for impugning His creation.

51. Just as seasickness is due, not to the sea's nature, but to the already existing disorder of the body's humors, sothe soul's

confusion and turmoil are due, not to the beauty of countenance in the person that it perceives, but to its pre-existing evil disposition.

52. The soul's apprehension of the nature of things changes in accordance with its own inner state. Thus when itsspiritual organs of perception operate in a way that accords with nature and the intellect unerringly penetrates to theinner essences of things, clearly and cogently elucidating their nature and function, then it perceives things andpersons and every material body as they are according to nature, and is aware that no seed of impurity or vitiationlies hidden within them. But when its powers operate in a way that is contrary to nature, and

are in a state of self-antagonism, it perceives things likewise in a way that is not in accord with nature; their natural beauty does not exaltit to an understanding of their Maker, but because of its own impassioned proclivities engulfs it in self-destruction.

53. If while you are engaged in ascetic labor and hardship God withdraws from you because of some bodily lapse,or lapse of tongue or thought, do not take this to be strange or untoward. The lapse is yours and due to yourself. Hadyou not yourself first indulged in some new-fangled, overweening and obnoxious thought about yourself, or had younot in arrogance treated someone disdainfully or criticized him for his human weakness, you would have recognizedyour own fallibility and God in His righteous judgment would not have withdrawn from you. Learn from this not tojudge (cf Matt. 7:1), not to think too highly of yourself (cf Rom. 12:3), and not to look down on others (cf. 1 Cor.

4:6).

54. When you have faUen into the depths of wickedness, do not despair of your recaU, even if you have beenbrought down to the nethermost reaches of hell. For if through the practice of the virtues you have alreadyestablished your ascetic life on a firm basis, God will not forget your former labors and hardships even if the stonesof virtue you have set in place should be shaken to the ground by the most impassioned of vices. Only you mustbring to Him a heart full of contrition for your lapse, and you must 'remember the days of old' (cf. Ps. 143:5),recalling your fall with deep sorrow before Him. He will then swiftly visit you as you tremble at His words (cf. Isa.66:2), and invisibly will touch the eyes of your grieving heart, recognizing the basis of virtue you have alreadyestablished through your labors; and together with fervor of spirit He will give you strength that is greater and moreperfect than your former strength. In this way the house of

virtue, patiently built up but then destroyed through the devil's malice, will in a spirit of humility be restored moresplendidly than before as His eternal dwelling-place.

55. Everything that brings disgrace upon us, whether prompted by man or demons, occurs through God's justjudgment in order to humble the overweening vanity of our soul. For God, the helmsman of our lives, wishes that weshould always be humble and have not an exaggerated but a modest view of ourselves (cf. Rom. 12:3); that weshould not have great ideas about ourselves, but should look to Christ and imitate, so far as we can. His blessedhumility; for He was 'gentle and humble in heart' (Matt. 11:29). He who for our sake endured a disgraceful, unjustdeath desires us to be like this, for there is nothing so dear to Him or that in its true virtue so fully accords with Him- nothing so apt to raise us from the dunghill of the passions - as gentleness and humility and love for our fellowbeings. If these are not present with us as we cultivate the virtues, all our labor is in vain and all our asceticendeavors are useless and unacceptable.

56. Those newly embarked on the ascetic life are assisted in the practice of the commandments and in their escapefrom evil by fear of punishment. But in those who through virtue have advanced to the contemplation of God's glorythis fear is followed by another fear - a pure fear (cf Ps. 19:9) - which, because it is caused by love, fills them withgreat dread. This helps them to stand unshaken in their love for God, instilling in them terror at falling away fromsuch love. If beginners in spiritual warfare lapse, but then repent and recover, they are filled once more with the firstfear, accompanied now by auspicious hope. But when those who have attained the heights of contemplation fallfrom them as a result of the devil's malice, they do not at once recover the second kind of fear. A grey mist and apalpable darkness (cf Exod. 10:21) envelop them, and they are filled with despondency, pain and bitterness,together with their earlier fear of punishment. And if the Lord of hosts did not curtail those days of unbearable pain,none who fall from the heights of contemplation would be rescued (cf. Matt. 24:22).

57. When our soul is freed from the persistent importunities of impassioned thoughts, and the flame that tormentsthe flesh dies away, we should recognize that the Holy Spirit is actively present within us, disclosing that our pastsins are forgiven and bestowing dispassion on us. But so long as we are still aware of the constant

importunity of such thoughts and our lower organs are enkindled as a result, we may be sure that the sweetfragrance of the Spirit is far from our soul, and that our soul is wholly subject to the unbroken bonds of the passionsand the senses.

58. 'I have seen under the sun', remarked the sage (cf. Eccles. 1:3; 9:11), 'a man who thought he was intelligent,who though mortal presumed on his own works and had a high opinion of his own human, worldly and psychicwisdom. Because of this not only did he look down on simple men, but he ridiculed the divinely-appointed Christianteachers and mocked them on account of their peculiar form of speech, their deliberate eschewing of the polisheddiction of academics, and the lack of rhythmical dexterity in their writings. To such a man, ignorant that God prefersclarity of thought to well-turned phrases or sonorous words, I would commend the maxims: "Better a living dog thana dead lion" (Eccles. 9:4), and "Better a poor and wise child than an old and foolish king, who no longer knows howto pay attention" ' (Eccles. 4:13. LXX).

59. Blasphemy is a frightful passion, difficult to combat, for its origin lies in the arrogant mind of Satan. Ittroubles all who live in virtue and in accord with God, but especially those advancing in prayer and in thecontemplation of things divine. Hence we must guard the senses with great diligence, and reverence all the awe-inspiring mysteries of God, the holy images and holy words, and watch out for the attacks of this spirit. For it lies inwait for us while we pray and chant, and when we are inattentive it discharges through our lips curses againstourselves and strange blasphemies against God the Most High, introducing them into the verses of the psalms andinto the words of our prayers. When it brings some such thing to our lips or sows it in our minds, we should turnagainst it the words of Christ and say, 'Get behind me, Satan, full of every foul odor and condemned to eternal fire;may your blasphemy fall upon your own head' (cf. Luke 4:8; Matt. 25:41). Then, concentrating our thoughts, weshould at once occupy our intellect with some other matter, either divine or human, and with tears raise it towardsGod; and so with God's assistance we will be relieved of the burden of blasphemy.

60. Dejection is a passion that corrupts soul and body, affecting even the marrow of one's bones - I mean thatcosmic dejection induced by the transitoriness of things and often resulting in death. The sorrow prompted by God,however, is extremely salutary.

enabling one patiently to endure hardships and trials. It is a source of compunction for those struggling andthirsting for God's righteousness (cf. Matt. 5:6), and nourishes their heart with tears. In such people is the saying ofDavid fulfilled, 'Thou shalt feed us with the bread of tears and give us tears to drink in great measure' (Ps. 80:5) - the

wine of compunction.

61. Sorrow prompted by God is an excellent tonic for those parts of the soul corrupted by evil actions, and itrestores them to their natural state. It dissolves through tears the storm-clouds of passion and sin and dispels themfrom the soul's spiritual firmament, so that at once a clear sky appears in the thoughts of our intellect, the sea of themind grows calm, gladness rises in the heart and a change comes over our face. When this is now seen by thoseskilled in discerning our inner state from our outward appearance, they will exclaim, as did David, 'This change isfrom the right hand of the Most High' (Ps. 77:10. LXX).

62. Do not keep company with those who enkindle in you suspicions about your fellow beings, for suchsuspicions are false, destructive and utterly deceitful. They are ploys through which the demons try to engulf thesouls of those progressing in virtue. For there is only one way in which the demons can thrust them into the pit ofperdition and active sin, and that is by persuading them to harbor evil suspicions about the outward behavior andinner state of their neighbor. By this means the demons contrive to have them condemned along with the world, inthe manner indicated by St Paul's phrase, 'If we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged; but when we arejudged, we are chastened by the Lord, so that we should not be condemned with the world' (1 Cor. 11:31-32).

63. When because of our laxity we allow the demons to beguile us with suspicious thoughts about other people -that is to say, when we fail to control the abduction of our eyes - then they incite us to pronounce judgment onothers, sometimes even those who are perfect in virtue. If someone is affable, with a cheerful, smiling face, we thinkhim prone to pleasure and the passions; and we assume that anyone who looks downcast and sullen is filled witharrogance and anger. But we ought not to concern ourselves with people's appearance.

Everyone is likely to judgewrongly in this respect; for men have various characters, temperaments and bodily features, the true assessment andstudy of which pertain only to those in whom the spiritual eye of the

soul has been cleansed through deep compunction, who are filled with the boundless light of divine life, and towhom it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God (cf Matt. 13:11).

64. When we act basely in obedience to our fallen self, we serve the soul's appetitive and mcensive powers in away that is contrary to nature. We defile the flesh with the noxious flux of sin, darken the soul with embittered angerand estrange ourselves from the Son of God. We should therefore cleanse the stain deriving from the body's intrinsicserosity with floods of heartfelt tears. In this way the body soiled by sensual indulgence on account of its naturalserosity will, because of our remorse, in its turn be purified through the natural flow of tears; and we will dispel withthe luminosity of compunction and the sweetness of a godlike love the cloud that darkens our soul because of ourembittered anger. Thus we shall once again be united with Him from whom we had been estranged.

65. Just as the stain produced by sensual indulgence presupposes a satanic desire to fulfill the shabby act itinvolves, so the purification that comes from our remorse presupposes heartfelt longing for the grief and tears whichpurification demands. In accordance with God's supernal goodness and providence, we expel and purge sensualindulgence through grief, and the flesh's baneful serosity through the flow of tears. In this way we expunge the

imprint of vilifying actions from the intellect and squalid images from the soul, disclosing ever more fully thesplendor of its natural beauty.

66. Prompted by the devil, the libertine reaps fleshly pleasure, and his ugly actions induce self-pollution.Prompted by the Holy Spirit, the man of God reaps joy of soul, and his acts of beauty induce purification throughtears, rebirth and union with God.

67. There are in us two natural fluids which come from the same source in our being: semen and our tears.Through the first we may sully our soul's garment, through the second we may cleanse it again. The stain that comesfrom our being has to be washed away with the tears that come from the same source. Otherwise it is impossible forus to cleanse this self-generated defilement.

68. The discordant soul, prompted by what is base, always acts in a manner that ends up in some fleeting pleasure;but the soul purged of vicious habits labors to attain enduring bliss. It is marvelous how the second form of pleasurerestrains the first, mollifying the pain engendered by self-indulgence.

69. Sometimes the How of tears produces an acrid and painful feeling in the heart's organ of spiritual perception,sometimes it induces delight and a sense of jubilation. Thus when through repentance we are in the process ofcleansing ourselves from the poison and stain of sin and, enkindled by divine (ire, hot tears of repentance flow fromus, and when our conscience is as it were smitten by the heart's anguish, then we experience this acrid feeling andpainfulness both spiritually and perceptibly. But when we have been largely cleansed by such tears and haveattained freedom from the passions, then - refreshed by the divine Spirit, our heart pure and tranquil - we are filledwith inexpressible tenderness and delight by the joyous tears provoked by compunction.

70. Tears of repentance are one thing, tears that flow because of divine compunction another. The first are like ariver in spate that sweeps away all the bastions of sin; the second are to the soul like rain or snow to a field, makingit yield a bountiful crop of spiritual knowledge.

71. Tears are not the same thing as compunction, and there is a great difference between them. Tears come fromthe transformation of our manner of life and the remembrance of our past lapses, as if fire and boiling water werepurifying the heart. Compunction descends from above as the divine dew of the Spirit, comforting and refreshing thesoul that has but recently entered with fervor into the depths of humility and attained the contemplation of theunapproachable light, crying out with joy as David cried, 'We went through fire and water; and

Thou hast brought usout into a place where the soul is refreshed' (Ps. 66:12. LXX).

72. I have heard people say that one cannot achieve a persistent state of virtue without retreating far into thedesert, and I was amazed that they should think that the unconfmable could be confined to a particular locality. Forthe state of virtue is the restitution of the soul's powers to their former nobility and the convergence of the principalvirtues in an activity that accords with nature. Such a state is not achieved adventitiously, by external influences; it isimplanted within us at our creation by virtue of our endemic divine and spiritual consciousness; and when we areimpelled by this inner consciousness in accordance with our true nature we are led into the kingdom of heaven

which, in our Lord's words, is 'within us' (cf. Luke 17:21). Thus the desert is in fact superfluous, since we can enterthe kingdom

simply through repentance and the strict keeping of God's commandments. Entry into the kingdom can occur, asDavid states, 'in all places of His dominion': for he says, 'In all places of His dominion bless the Lord, 0 my soul'(Ps. 103:22).

73. If you are in the ranks of the imperial army, fighting together with others under the command of generals andcaptains, and yet you fail to do anything noble or bold in battle against the enemy or even put a single one of them toflight, how will you be able to fight alone among so many enemies or perform any feat of brilliant strategy,inexperienced as you are in warfare? And if this is impossible in human affairs, it is all the more so where thingsdivine are concerned. If you flee into the desert, how will you recognize the attacks of the demons, the open andcovert assaults of the passions? How will you be able to attack them yourself, unless you have first been well trainedin thwarting your own will by dwelling with a group of brethren under a leader experienced in such invisible andspiritual warfare? And if you are incapable of fighting even on your own behalf, then it is clearly inconceivable thatyou should do so on behalf of others and teach them how to defeat their invisible enemies.

74. Expunge from yourself the disgrace of negligence and the ignominy of disdaining God's commandments.Dispel self-love and battle with your fallen self unsparingly. Seek out the judgments of the Lord and Histestimonies. Scorn glory and dishonor. Hate the titillating appetites of the body. Avoid overeating, because thisenkindles your lower organs. Embrace poverty and hardship. Resist the passions. Introvert your senses towards yoursoul. Inwardly assent to the doing of what is more noble. Be deaf to human affairs. Expend all your strength inpracticing the commandments. Mourn, sleep on the ground, fast, endure hardship, be still and, last of all, know, notthe things around you, but yourself. Transcend the lowly state of visible things. Open your spiritual eye to thecontemplation of God and recognize the dehghtfulness of the Lord from the beauty of creation. And when youdescend from these heights of contemplation, speak to your brethren about eternal life and the mysteries of God'skingdom. This is the purpose of flight from men through the strictest asceticism, and the ultimate goal of the life ofsolitude.

75. If you wish to see the blessings 'that God has prepared for those who love Him' (1 Cor. 2:9), then take up yourabode in the desert of the renunciation of your own will and flee the world. What world?

The world of the lust of the eyes, of your fallen self (cf. 1 John 2:16), the presumptuousness of your own thoughts,the deceit of things visible. If you flee from this world, then light will dawn for you, you will see the life that is inGod, and the medicine of your soul - that is, tears - will swiftly well up in you. You will experience the changebrought about by the right hand of the Most High'(Ps. 77:10), and from that time the 'plague' of the passions will not'come near your dwelling' (Ps. 91:10). In this way, living in the world and among people, you will be like a manliving in the desert and seeing no one. If you do not flee the world in such a manner, you will gain nothing asregards the perfecting of virtue and union with God simply by flight from the visible world.

76. To become a monk does not mean to abandon men and the world, but to renounce the will of the flesh, to bedestitute of the passions. If it was once said

to a great spiritual master, 'Flee men and you will be saved', it was saidin precisely this spirit: for even after he fled, he dwelt among men and lived in inhabited regions along with hisdisciples. But because he so assiduously fled in a spiritual sense at the same time as he fled visibly, he suffered noharm from being with other men. And another great monk cried as he came out of a meeting, 'Flee, my brethren!'And when asked what he meant by this, he pointed to his mouth.

77. Living together in one place is safer than living alone. The sacred words of Jesus our God bear witness to thenecessity of living together; for He says, 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am in the midst ofthem' (Matt. 18:20). Likewise Solomon speaks about the danger of living alone when he says, 'Alas for him who isalone when he falls; for he has no one to help him up' (Eccles. 4:10). And David calls those who praise God in loveand concord blessed when he says, 'Blessed is the people that sing aloud together' (Ps. 89:15); and he commends lifein community, saying: 'Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together' (Ps. 133:1). And amongthe disciples of our Lord there was but a single soul and a single heart (cf Acts 4:32); and even God's incarnationdid not take place in the wilderness, but in inhabited areas and among

sinful men. Thus we have need of the concord of communal life. Isolation is treacherous and full of danger.

78. 'Offensive provocations have to come.' said the Lord, 'but alas for him through whom such provocationcomes!' (Matt. 18:7). The monk who loses his sense of reverence and behaves insolently, without awe for God, inthe company of his brethren scandalizes many of the more simple among them. He does this by his acts, bearing andbad habits, and by his words and vicious talk. He corrupts their souls and undermines their probity.

79. If you keep God's commandments you will not become a stumbling-block to others, for there will be nothingoffensive or provocative in you. 'Great peace have they who love Thy law, and for them there is no stumbling-block'(Ps. 119:165. LXX). Rather they are light, salt and life, in conformity with the Lord's

words, 'You are the light of theworld, and the salt of the earth' (cf Matt. 5:13-14). Light, because they are virtuous in life, lucid in speech, and wisein thought; salt, because they are rich in divine knowledge and strong in the wisdom of God; life, because throughtheir words they bring to life those slain by the passions, raising them up from the pit of despair. Through the lightof their righteous works they shine before men and illumine them; with the sweet astrmgency of their words theybrace those softened by sluggishness and free them from the putrescence of the passions; and by the life present in

what they say they give hfe to souls deadened by sin.

80. The passion of self-esteem is a three-pronged barb heated and forged by the demons out of vanity,presumption and arrogance. Yet those who dwell under the protection of the God of heaven (cf. Ps. 91:1) detect iteasily and shatter its prongs; for through their humility they rise above such vices and find repose in the tree of life.

81. While you are progressing in virtue this unclean and wily demon of self-esteem may attack you and predictthat you will have a throne in heaven, reminding you of all your labor, extolling it above that of others, and evensuggesting that you are capable of guiding souls. If this happens, and you have been given power from on high toenable you to do so, seize hold of him spiritually and do not let him escape. Once you have caught him, considerwhat unworthy act of yours has provoked his attack; and confronting him with this act, say to him: 'Are those whobehave in this way worthy of ascending to such privileged heights, and do you regard them as qualified to guidesouls

and lead them to salvation in Christ? Tell me, for I shall be silent.' Since he will have nothing to say to you in reply,out of shame he will disappear like smoke and will no longer greatly trouble you. And even if you have not done orsaid anything unworthy of the transcendent life you have embraced, yet compare yourself with the commandmentsand the sufferings of the Lord, and you will find that you fall as short of perfection as a basinful of water falls shortof the sea. For man's righteousness is as far from the righteousness of God as the earth

is in size from the heavens ora flea from a lion.

82. He who has been deeply smitten by the love of God will find that his bodily strength is not equal to his desire,for there are no limits to the ascetic labor in which he yearns to engage. He is like someone consumed by thirst, andthe fire of his desire is insatiable. He longs to labor night and day, but is thwarted by his body's lack of strength. Ithink that Christ's martyrs were not aware of the pain they suffered precisely because they were overpowered bysuch an enormous passion. Mastering themselves through their burning love for God, they could not have their fillof the torments inflicted on them, and felt that their desire to suffer was never assuaged.

83. He who in any way compares himself with his fellow ascetics or with the brethren who live with him isunaware that he deceives himself and treads a path alien to God. Either he does not know himself or he has deviatedfrom the path that leads heavenwards. But by following this path in modesty of mind, those more spirituallyadvanced surmount the devil's ploys and, winged by dispassion and adorned with humility, they attain the heights ofspiritual illumination.

84. If you are puffed up and full of presumption you will never be illumined by compunction or attain the grace ofhumility. It is through this that the light of God's wisdom is bestowed on those with contrite hearts, in accordancewith the words, 'In Thy light shall we see light' (Ps. 36:9). On the contrary, you will be swaddled in the night of thepassions, in which all the beasts in the forest of man's nature prowl around, and in which the clamorous whelps ofpresumption - by which I mean the demons of self-esteem and unchastity - seek whom they may devour anddispatch into the maw of despair (cf Ps. 104:20-21; 1 Pet. 5:8).

85. For the man who lives as most men, prompted by the spirit of presumption, this present hfe becomes a seaembroiled by the powers of evil; the noetic aspect of his soul is flooded with the brine of sensual

pleasure, its triple powers assailed by the fierce waves of the passions. The ship of his soul, and its rudder, areshattered by carnal self-indulgence; the intellect,

his pilot, sinks into the depths of sin and spiritual death; and he isengulfed in a slough of despondency. Only the deep calm of humility can quell those malignant waves, and onlyunder the gentle flow of tears can the brine of sensual pleasures be changed into the luminosity of compunction.

86. If you have enslaved yourself to bodily pleasure and indulgence to the point of repletion, you will need acorresponding measure of ascetic labor and hardship. Thus one form of repletion will counter another, pain willcounter pleasure, bodily labor will counter bodily ease, and you will enjoy unmeasured felicity and repose,delighting in the fragrance of purity and chastity, and relishing the indescribable savor of the deathless fruits of theSpirit. In a similar way we apply cleansing unguents to the stains on our clothing when they have penetrated sodeeply that we cannot wear it any longer.

87. To those newly engaged in spiritual warfare illness is salutary, for it contributes to reducing and subduing theebullience of the flesh. It greatly debilitates the flesh and attenuates the soul's materialistic propensities, while at thesame time it invigorates and braces the soul, in accordance with St Paul's words, 'When I am weak, then I am strong'(2 Cor. 12:10). Yet the benefits that it brings to beginners are equaled by the harm that it does to those who haveprogressed in the labors of virtue and have now transcended the world of the senses and entered into the realm ofspiritual contemplation. It hinders their devotion to things divine and coarsens their soul's consciousness withdistress and affliction, darkening it with despondency and drying up its compunction in the drought of its suffering.Paul knew this well when, attentive to himself in conformity with the law of discrimination, he said, 'I discipline mybody through hardship and bring it into subjection through healing remedies, lest after preaching to others I myselfshould be cast away' (cf 1 Cor. 9:27).

88. It often happens that illness occurs as a result of an irregular and unbalanced regimen, as when those proficientin spiritual warfare fast Or extend their ascetic labors excessively and indiscreetly, or when they become prone togluttony and repletion, the enemies of nature. Thus self-control is necessary both for those who are newly embarkedon the spiritual path and for those who, now beyond mid-course, aspire to the higher reaches of contemplation; forself-control

is the mother of heahh, the friend of purity and the beloved consort of humihty.

89. Dispassion is of two kinds and takes two main forms in those weU advanced on the spiritual path. They attainthe first kind of dispassion when they have become adept in the practice of the virtues. This dispassion, arising invarious ways as a result of their toil in practicing the commandments, at once mortifies the passions and cuts off theimpulses of the fallen self; at the same time it induces the powers of the soul to act in a way that accords with nature,and restores the intellect to conscious meditation on things divine. Subsequently, when they embark on thecontemplation of the inner essences of created things, they attain in their wisdom the second and more perfect kindof dispassion. Bringing inner stillness to their thoughts, this dispassion raises them to a state of intellectual peace,making their intellect visionary and prophetic to the highest degree: visionary in matters divine, in insight intosupernal realities, and in the disclosure of God's mysteries; prophetic in matters human, destined to happen in thedistant future. In both these forms of dispassion one and the same Spirit is at work (cf 1 Cor. 12:11): through thefirst He controls and sustains, through the second He dispenses the freedom of eternal life.

90. When you approach the frontiers of dispassion - attaining a right view of God and the nature of things, andaccording to your growth in purity ascending to the Creator through the beauty of His creatures - you will beillumined by the Holy Spirit. Entertaining kindly feelings about all men and always thinking good of all, you willlook on all as pure and holy and will rightly esteem things both human and divine. You will desire none of thematerial things that men seek but, divesting yourself of worldly sense-perception by means of the intellect, you willascend towards heaven and towards God, free from all impurity and from every form of servitude, aware in spiritonly of God's blessings and His beauty. Thus, full of reverence and joy, and in indescribable silence, you will dwellin the divine realm of God's blessed glory, all your senses transformed, and at the same time you will live spirituallyamong men like an angel in a material body.

91. Five senses characterize the ascetic life: vigilance, meditation, prayer, self-control and stillness. Once youhave linked your five outward senses to them, joining sight to vigilance, hearing to meditation, smell to prayer, tasteto self-control and touch to stillness.

you will swiftly purify your soul's intellect: refining it by means of them, you will make it dispassionate andvisionary.

92. A dispassionate intellect is one that has gained control over its own passions and risen above both dejectionand joy. It is neither subject to bouts of depression nor ebullient with high spirits, but is joyful in affliction,restrained when cheerful, and temperate in all things.

93. The demons rage violently against those who are progressing in contemplation, lying in wait for them nightand day. Through fellow-ascetics they provoke formidable trials, while through their own direct action they terrifythem with noises. Even when they are asleep they attack them, grudging them any rest. They harass them in variousways, even though they cannot injure those who have surrendered themselves to God. If an angel of the Lord Goddid not protect them, they could not escape the demons' attack and the snares of death.

94. If you are energetically struggling to practice the virtues, watch out for the ploys of the pernicious demons.The more you advance towards the heights of virtue and the more divine light increases in your prayers, and thecloser you come to revelations and ineffable visions through the Spirit, the more they will gnash their teeth as theysee you mounting towards heaven, and craftily spread their many nets of iniquity through the intellectual firmament.For not only will the demons of lust and anger, flesh-avid and bestial, breathe on you, but with acrid malice thedemons of blasphemy will also rise up against you. In addition, the visible and invisible powers and principalitiesthat wing through the air, in naked fancy changing themselves into strange and frightening forms, will batten on youand do you as much harm as they can. But if, with the eye of your intellect vigilant, you devote yourself to thespiritual work of prayer and to contemplation of the inner essences of God's creation, you will not be frightened bytheir 'arrow that flies by day' (Ps. 91:5), nor will they be able to invade your inner sanctuary; for like darkness theywill be repulsed by the light that is in you and consumed in divine fire.

95. The spirits of evil are extremely frightened of the grace of the divine Spirit,

especially when it is abundantlypresent in us or when we have been cleansed through meditation and pure prayer. Not daring to invade our innersanctuary when we are illumined from that source, they try to alarm and trouble us by means of fantasies, fearfulnoises and meaningless screams, so as to divert us from vigil and prayer. They

do not spare us even when we allow ourselves a little sleep on the ground: begrudging us the slightest rest fromour labors, they set upon us and dash sleep from our eyes with some commotion or other, thinking by such means tomake our life more difficult and painful.

96. As we can learn from experience, the spirits of darkness seem to take on a subtle bodily form. This may be anillusion that they produce by deceiving our senses, or it may be that they are condemned to take such a form as theresult of their age-old fall. In any case, they impetuously intertwine themselves with the struggling soul as ourservile body draws it towards sleep. This seems to me to be a kind of testing for a soul that has but recentlytranscended the body's low estate: it provides an opportunity for the incensive and virile aspect of the soul to proveits mettle by reacting with wrath and violence against the demons that threaten it so formidably. The soul smittenwith intense love for God and braced by .the principal virtues will not only oppose the demons with righteousindignation, but will actually strike back at them - if, that is, having become so entirely earth-bound as a result oftheir fall from the primal divine light, they do have a perceptible appearance.

97. Before mtenneshmg with the soul and defeating it, the demons often disturb the soul's organs of perceptionand snatch sleep from our eyes. Yet the soul filled with manly courage by the Holy Spirit will pay no heed to thebitter fury of their attack, but will dispel their fantasies and put them to flight solely by means of the life-giving signof the cross and the invocation of Jesus our God.

98. If you have embarked on the task of despoiling the hostile spirits through the practice of the virtues, see thatyou are thoroughly armed with the weapons of the Spirit. Are you aware of who it is you want to despoil? They areenemies, to be

sure, but noetic and fleshless, while you are still doing battle with the body under the King of the

spirits and our God. You must realize that they will fight against you more bitterly than before and that there will bemany who will deploy their tricks against you. If, then, you fail to notice them and to strip them of their spoils theywill take you prisoner, filling your soul with great bitterness; or else they will subject you to evil and distressingtemptations, acting as a grievous thorn in your flesh (cf 2 Cor. 12:7).

99. A good spring does not produce turbid, foul-smelling water, redolent of worldly matter; nor can a heart that isoutside the kingdom

of heaven gush with streams of divine life, giving out the sweet savor of spiritual myrrh. 'Does a spring from thesame opening gush with sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree bear olives, or an olive tree acorns?' (cf Jas. 3:11-12). In the same way a single spring in the heart cannot produce simultaneously both good and bad images. Rather,'a good man out of the good treasure-house of his heart brings forth that which is good; and an evil man out of theevil treasure-house of his heart brings forth that which is evil', as the Lord has said (Luke 6:45).

100. Just as it is impossible without oil and flame for a lamp to bum and thus to give light to those in the house,so it is impossible without the divine fire and Spirit for a soul to speak clearly about divine matters and to illumineothers. For every perfect gift bestowed on the devout soul 'is from above . . . from the Father of lights, in whomthere is no variableness or shadow due to change' (Jas. 1:17).

1. Love for God begins with detachment from things human and visible. Purification of heart and intellect marksthe intermediate stage, for through such purification the eye of the intellect is spiritually unveiled and we attainknowledge of the kingdom of heaven hidden within us (cf. Luke 17:21). The final stage is consummated in anirrepressible longing for the supernatural gifts of God and in a natural desire for union with God and for findingone's abode in Him.

2. Where there is intense longing for God, noetic labor, and participation in the unapproachable light, there too thesoul's powers will be at peace, the intellect will be purified, and the Holy Trinity will dwell within us; for it iswritten, 'He who loves Me will fulfill My teaching, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and takeup Our abode in him' (John 14:23).

3. Our teaching recognizes three modes of living: the carnal, the psychic and the spiritual. Each of these is

characterized by its own particular attitude to life, distinctive to itself and dissimilar to that of the others.

4. The carnal mode of life is one wholly devoted to the pleasures and enjoyments of this present life, and hasnothing to do with the psychic and spiritual modes of life, and does not even have any wish to acquire them. Thepsychic mode, which is situated on the borderline between evil and virtue, is preoccupied with the care andstrengthening of the body and with men's praise; it not only repudiates the labors required for virtue, but also rejectscarnal indulgence. It avoids both virtue and vice but for opposite reasons: virtue because this requires toil anddiscipline; vice because that would entail forfeiting

men's praise. The spiritual mode of life, on the other hand, has nothing in common with these two other modes, andon this account is not implicated in the evil that pertains to either: it is entirely free in every way from both the oneand

the other. Invested with the wings of love and dispassion, it soars above them both, doing nothing that isforbidden and not being hamstrung by evil.

5. Those who pursue the carnal mode of life and in whom the will of the flesh is imperious - who are, quitesimply, carnal - are not able to conform to God's will (cf Rom. 8:8). Their judgment is eclipsed and they are totallyimpervious to the rays of divine light: the engulfing clouds of the passions are like high walls that shut out theresplendence of the Spirit and leave them without illumination. Their soul's senses maimed, they cannot aspire toGod's spiritual beauty and see the light of the true life and so transcend the lowliness of visible things. It is as if theyhad become beasts conscious only of this world, with the dignity of their intelligence fettered to things sensory andhuman. They strive only for what is visible and corruptible, on this account fighting among themselves and evensacrificing their lives for such things, avid for wealth, glory and the pleasures of the flesh, and regarding the lack ofany of these things as a disaster. To such people applies the prophetic statement that comes from God's own mouth:'My Spirit shall not remain in these men, for they are flesh' (Gen. 6:3. LXX).

6. Those who pursue the psychic mode of life and are therefore called 'psychic' are like the mentally defectivewhose limbs do not function properly. They never exert themselves on behalf of virtue or in the practice of God'scommandments, and they refrain from acting reprehensibly simply in order to gain the esteem of other people. Theyare completely under the sway of self-love, nurse of the destructive passions, and they seek out whatever fostersphysical health and pleasure. They repudiate all tribulation, effort and hardship embraced for the sake of virtue, andthey cosset our enemy the body more than they should. Through such life and behavior their passion-imbuedintellect grows cloddish and becomes impervious to the divine and spiritual realities whereby the soul is pluckedfrom the world of matter and soars into the noetic heaven. This happens to them because they are still possessed bythe spirit of matter, love themselves, and choose to do what they themselves want. Void of the Holy Spirit, they haveno share in His gifts. As a result they exhibit no godly fruit - love for God and for their fellow men - no joy in themidst of poverty and

tribulation, no peace of soul, no deeply-rooted faith, no all-embracing self-control. Neither do they experiencecompunction, tears, humility or compassion, but they are altogether filled with conceit and arrogance. Hence theyare totally incapable of plumbing the depths of the Spirit, for there is no guiding light in diem to open their intellectto the understanding of the Scriptures (cf Luke 24:45); indeed, they cannot endure even to hear other people talkingabout such things. St Paul was quite right when he said that 'the psychic man cannot grasp spiritual things: they arefolly to him; he is unaware that the law is spiritual and must be discerned spiritually' (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14).

7. Those who 'cleave to the Spirit' (Gal. 5:25) and are totally committed to the spiritual life live in accordance withGod's will, dedicated to Him as were the Nazirites (cf. Num. 6:2-8; Judg. 13:5). At all times they labor to purifytheir soul and to keep the Lord's commandments, expending their blood in their love for Him. They purify the fleshthrough fasts and vigils; they refine the heart's dross with tears; they mortify their materialistic tendencies throughascetic hardship; they fill the intellect with light through prayer and meditation, making it translucid; and byrenouncing their own wills they sunder themselves from passionate attachment to the body and adhere solely to theSpirit. As a result everyone recognizes them as spiritual, and rightly refers to them as such. As they approach thestate of dispassion and love, they ascend to the contemplation of the inner essences of created things; and from thisthey acquire the knowledge of created being that is bestowed by the hidden wisdom of God (cf. 1 Cor. 2:7) andgiven only to those who have risen above the body's low estate. Thus it is that when they have passed beyond allsensory experience of this world and have entered with an illumined mind into the realms that are above sense-perception, their intelligence is enlightened and they utter righteous words from a pure heart in the midst of theChurch of God and the great congregation of the faithful (cf. Ps. 40 : 9-10). For other people they are salt and light,as the Lord says of them: 'You are the light of the world and the salt of (he earth' (cf. Matt. 5:13-14).

8. 'Devote yourselves to stillness and know that 1 am God' (Ps. 46:10). This is the voice of the divine Logos and isexperienced as such by those who put the words into practice. Thus once you have renounced the turmoil andfrightening vanity of life you should in stillness scnitinize yourself and the inner reality of

things with the

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Nikitas Stithatos

On the Inner Nature of Things and on the Purification of the Intellect:

One Hundred Texts

utmost attentiveness and should seek to blow more fully the God within yourself, for His kingdom is within us (cf.Luke 17 : 21). Yet even if you do this over a long period of time it will be difficult for you to erase the imprint of

evil from your soul and to restore it wholly to its Creator in all its primal beauty.

9. Since we are so greatly imbued with the poison of evil we are in a correspondingly great need of the cleansingfire of repentant tears and voluntary ascetic labor. For we are purged of the stains of sin either through embracingsuch labor willingly or through afflictions that come unsought. If we first engage in voluntary ascetic labor, we willbe spared the unsought afflictions; but if we fail to cleanse 'the inside of the cup and the dish' (cf. Matt. 23:26)through ascetic labor, the afflictions will restore us to our original state with a greater harshness. So the Creator hasordained.

10. If you do not enter the way of renunciation in the right spirit -if, that is to say, from the start you refuse toaccept a teacher and guide but, regarding yourself as an adept, rely on your own judgment - you will make amockery of the religious life and in turn will be mocked by what happens to you.

11. Just as you cannot know exactly the causes and cures of bodily afflictions without great medical experienceand skill, so you cannot know those of psychic afflictions without great spiritual training and practice. The diagnosisof bodily illnesses is a tricky business and only a few are truly versed in it; but the diagnosis of psychic illnesses isfar more tricky. The soul is superior to the body, and correspondingly its afflictions are greater and harder tounderstand than those of the body, which is visible to all.

12. The principal and primary virtues were co-created with man as part of his nature. From them the rivers of allthe other virtues are filled as from four well-

heads, and they water the city of God, which is the heart cleansed andrefreshed by tears. If you keep these four principal virtues impregnable to the spirits of malice, or if they fall but youraise them up again through the travails of repentance, you will build yourself a royal palace in which the King ofAll may make His abode (cf. John 14:2]), lavishly bestowing His lofty gifts on those who have thus prepared theground.

13. Life is short, the age to come is long, and little the length of our present existence. Man, this great but pettybeing, to whom the scant present has been allotted, is weak. Time is scant, man weak, but the

contest set before him, with its prize, is great, even if it is full of thorns and puts our trivial life at risk.

14. God does not wish the labors of those well advanced on the spiritual path to go untested, but wants them to bewell tried. Consequently He casts upon them the fire of temptation and withdraws for a short time the grace giventhem, allowing the tranquility of their thoughts to be perturbed for a while by the spirits of malice. In this manner Hesees which way the soul will turn, and whether it will favor its own Creator and Benefactor or the senses of thisworld and the lure of pleasure. Depending on their proclivity He will either augment His grace in them as theyadvance in love of Him, or lash them with temptation and tribulation if they indulge in worldly thoughts and actions,continuing this until they come to hate the unstable whirl of visible things and with tears wash away the bitterness ofits pleasures.

15. When the peace of your thoughts is disturbed by the spirits of malice, then those huntsmen - the flesh-lovingdemons - will at once assault your swiftly-mounting intellect with the fiery arrows of desire (cf Eph. 6:16). As aresult its upward motion is thwarted and it succumbs to unseemly, corrupt impulses; the flesh licentiously begins torevolt against the spirit, through titivation and incitement seeking to drag the intellect down into the pit of pleasure.And if the

Lord of hosts did not curtail those days and grant His servants the strength to endure, 'no flesh would besaved' (cf Matt. 24:22).

16. The highly experienced and wily demon of unchastity is for some a pitfall, for others a well-merited scourge,for others a test or trial of soul. He is a pitfall for those newly engaged in spiritual warfare, who still bear the asceticyoke slackly and negligently; a scourge for those who have advanced midway along the path of virtue but then relaxin their efforts; a test or trial for those who on the wings of the intellect have already entered the sphere ofcontemplation and who now aspire to the more perfect form of dispassion. Each category is thus divinely guided inthe way that suits it best.

17. The demon of unchastity is a pitfall for those who live the ascetic life perfunctorily. It kindles their limbs withsensual desire and suggests ways of carrying out the will of me flesh even without intercourse with other flesh,something of which it is shameful even to speak or think (cf. Eph. 5:12). Such people defile the flesh (cf. Jude 8)and devour the fruits of bitter pleasure, blinding themselves and

deservedly slipping from the higher realms. If they wish for healing, they will find it in the fervor of repentance andthe tearful compunction' that flows from it. This will make them flee from evil and will cleanse their soul from itsimpurity, making it an heir of God's mercy. In his wisdom Solomon referred to this cryptically when he said,'Healing puts an end to great offences' (cf. Eccles. 10:4. LXX).

18. This demon is a well-merited scourge for those who through the practice of the virtues have attained the firstdegree of dispassion and are now progressing to what lies beyond this and is more perfect. For when out ofsluggishness they slacken the tension of their ascetic practice and deviate, albeit slightly, towards unguardedpreoccupation with the sensible world, longing to involve themselves in human affairs, then, as a result of God'sgreat goodness towards them, this

demon acts as scourge: it begins to assail those who deviate in this way withthoughts tainted by carnal desire. Unable to bear this, they swiftly revert to their stronghold of intense asceticpractice and attentiveness, performing with ever greater eagerness and even more strenuously the tasks that will savethem. In His bounteousness, God does not wish the soul that has reached this stage to turn completely to the worldof the senses; on the contrary. He wants it to progress continuously and to embrace zealously ever more perfectworks, so that no plague will come near its dwelling (cf. Ps. 91:10. LXX).

19. Through God's economy, this same demon is a test, a thorn and a trial for those who, having attained the first,aspire to the second degree of dispassion. So long as the demon troubles them, they recall the weakness of theirnature and do not become conceited because of the 'abundance of the revelations' (2 Cor. 12:7) that they have

received through contemplation. Rather, keenly aware, of the law that wars against the law of the intellect (cf. Rom.7:23), they repudiate even the passion-free recollection of sin, lest by recalling it they re-experience the defilement itengenders and thereby let the eye of the intellect lapse from the heights of contemplation.

20. Only those who through the Spirit have been privileged to receive the life-quickening deadness of the Lord(cf. 2 Cor. 4:10) in their limbs and thoughts can keep their intellect untroubled even by the passion-free memory ofsin. Their flesh is dead to sin, while through the righteousness that is in Christ Jesus they have enriched their spiritwith life (cf. Rom. 8:10). Those who through their consciousness of wisdom have received the intellect of Christwill also

experience the untroubled life-quickening deadness that comes from knowledge of God.

21. The spirit of desire and anger is liable to invade souls but recently purified.

To do what? To shake down thefruits of the Holy Spirit burgeoning within them. For the joy of freedom produces a certain confusion in such souls;they tend to exalt themselves over others because of their great freedom and the richness of their gifts, and also tothink that they have attained this great palace of peace through their own strength and understanding. Hence theWisdom that orders all things for good, and seeks always to attract these souls to itself by means of its gifts and tokeep them unshaken in their humility, withdraws from them slightly and so permits this spirit of desire and anger toattack them. Plunged as a result into the fear of falling, they once more keep guard over blessed humility; and,recognizing that they are bound to flesh and blood, they search in accordance with their true nature for the innerstronghold where by the power of the Holy Spirit they can sustain themselves unharmed.

22. The vehemence of our trials and temptations depends upon the degree to which we are debilitated by thepassions and infected by sin; and the bitter cup of God's judgment varies accordingly. If the nature of the sin withinus is such that it is easily treated and cured - if, that is to say, it consists of thoughts that are self-indulgent or worldly- then the Healer of our souls in His compassion adds but a mild dose of wormwood to the cup of trial andtemptation He administers, since these are merely human ailments by which we are afflicted. But if the sin is deep-seated and hard to cure - a lethal infection of pretentious arrogant thoughts - then in the keenness of His wrath Hegives us the cup undiluted, so that, dissolved and refined in the fire of successive trials and the humility they induce,the sickness may be removed from our soul and we may wash away our brackish thoughts with tears, thuspresenting ourselves pure in the light of humility to our Healer.

23. Those engaged in spiritual warfare can escape from the cycle of trial and temptation only by recognizing theirweakness, and regarding themselves as strangers to righteousness and unworthy of any solace, honor, or repose.God, the doctor of our souls, wishes us to be always humble and modest, detached from our fellow-men andimitators of His sufferings. For He was 'gentle and humble in heart' (Matt. 11:29), and wants us to pursue the path ofHis commandments with a similar gentleness and humility of heart.

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24. Humility is not achieved by means of a scraggy neck, squalid hair, or filthy, ragged and unkempt clothing, towhich the generality of men ascribe the sum total of this virtue. It comes from a contrite heart and a spirit of self-abasement. As David said, 'God will not scorn a contrite spirit, and a contrite and humble heart' (cf. Ps. 51:19.LXX).

25. To speak humbly is one thing, to act humbly is another, and to be inwardly humble is something else again.Through all manner of hardship and through the outward labors of virtue those engaged in spiritual warfare canattain the qualities of speaking and acting humbly, for these qualities require-no more than bodily effort anddiscipline. But because the soul of such people often lacks inner stability, when temptation confronts them they areeasily shaken. Inward humility, on the other hand, is something exalted and divine, bestowed through the indwellingof the Paraclete only on those who have passed the midpoint of the spiritual way - who have, that is to say, throughacting in all humility traversed the rigorous path of virtue.

26. The soul is so distressed and oppressed when inner humility like a weighty stone has penetrated its depths,that it loses all its strength because of the tears which it uncontrollably sheds; while the intellect, cleansed of everydefiling thought, attains like Isaiah to the vision of God. Under that divine mfluence it too confesses, 'How abject 1am -1 am pierced to the heart; because 1 am a man of unclean lips, and 1 dwell among a people of unclean lips; andmy eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts' (Isa. 6:5).

27. When the ability to speak humbly is firmly established within you, then you will no longer indulge in boastfultalk; when you act spontaneously in humbleness of heart, then you will cease from humble speech, whethersuperficial or profound; and when you are enriched by God with inner humility then both humility of outward actionand humility of the tongue will no longer have any place in you. It is as St Paul said: 'But when that which is perfectcomes, that which is partial is done away with' (1 Cor. 13:10).

28. Genuine humility of speech is as remote from genuine humility of action as East is from West. And as heavensurpasses earth, or the soul the body, so the

inner humility given to the saints through the Holy Spirit excels genuinehumility of action.

29. Do not readily assume that someone who in outward appearance and dress, and in manner of speech, seems tobe humble is

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actually humble at heart; and do not assume - unless you have put it to the test - that someone who speaks exaltedlyof high things is full of boastfulness and vanity. For 'you shall' know them by their fruits' (Matt. 7:16).

30. The fruits of the Holy Spirit are love, joy, peace, goodness, long-suffering, kindness, faith, gentleness, self-control (cf. Gal. 5:22-23). The fruits of the spirit of evil are hatred, worldly despondency, restlessness of soul, atroubled heart, guile, inquisitive-ness, negligence, anger, lack of faith, envy, gluttony, drunkenness, abusiveness,censoriousness, the lust of the eyes (cf. 1 John 2:16), vanity and pretentiousness of soul. By these fruits you mayknow the tree (cf. Matt. 12:33), and in this way you will certainly recognize what kind of spirit you have to dealwith. An even clearer indication of these things is given by the Lord Himself when He says, 'A good man out of thegood treasury of his heart brings forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasury of his heart brings forthevil things' (Matt. 12:35). For as the tree, so is the fruit.

31. God dwells in those in whom the fruits of the Holy Spirit are evident and, whether they speak of lowly orexalted things, from them flows, full of wisdom and knowledge, the unsullied spring of the Logos. Those whodisplay the fruits and gifts not of the Holy Spirit but of the spirit of evil are on the other hand benighted withignorance of God and swarm with the passions and hostile spirits; and this is so whether they speak and dresshumbly, or whether they speak exaltedly, wear fine clothes, and bear themselves with an outward show of pomp.

32. Truth is not evinced by looks, gestures or words, and God reposes not in these things but in a contrite heart, ahumble spirit and a soul illumined by the

knowledge of God. Sometimes we see someone speaking to all comers inan outwardly obsequious and humble manner, while inwardly he pursues the praise of men and is filled with self-conceit, guile, malice and rancor. And there are times when we see someone fighting for righteousness outwardlywith lofty words of wisdom, taking a stand against falsehood or the transgression of God's laws, and looking only tothe truth, while within he is all modesty, humility, and love for his fellow-men. Sometimes also we see such aperson glorying in the Lord after the manner of St Paul, who when he gloried in the Lord said, 'I will glory in myinfirmities' (2 Cor. 12:9).

33. God looks not at the outward form of what we say or do, but at[V4] 116

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the disposition of our soul and the purpose for which we perform a visible action or express a thought. In the sameway those of greater understanding than others look rather to the inward meaning of words and the intention ofactions, and unfalteringly assess them accordingly. Man looks at the outward form, but God looks on the heart (cf. 1Sam. 16:7).

34. God has judged it right that from generation to generation His prophets and friends should be equipped by theSpirit for the building up of His Church (cf. Eph. 4:11-13). For since the old serpent still devastates men's souls byspewing the poison of sin into their ears, how could He who fashioned our hearts one by one (cf. Ps. 33:15) not raisethe needy from the earth of humility and lift them from the dunghill of the passions (cf. Ps. 113:7), assisting His

inheritance with 'the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God' (Eph. 6:17)? Rightly, then, do those who beginwith humility, and deny themselves, rise to the heights of spiritual knowledge, receiving from on high the teachingsof wisdom through the power of God, so that they may proclaim the Gospel of salvation to His Church.

35. 'Know thyself: this is true humility, the humility that teaches us to be inwardly humble and makes our heartcontrite. Such humility you must cultivate and guard. For if you do not yet know yourself you cannot know whathumility

is, and have not yet embarked truly on the task of cultivating and guarding. To know oneself is the goal ofthe practice of the virtues.

36. If having achieved a state of purity you advance to the knowledge of the essences of created beings, you willhave fulfilled the injunction, 'Know thyself If on the other hand you have not yet attained a knowledge of the inneressences of creation and of things both divine and human, you may know what is outside and around you, but youwill still be totally ignorant of your own self.

37. What 1 am is not at all the same as that which characterizes me; nor is what characterizes me the same as thatwhich relates to my situation; nor is what relates to my situation the same as that which is external to me. In eachcase the one is distinct from the other. What 1 am is an image of God manifest in a spiritual, immortal and intelligentsoul, having an intellect that is the father of my consciousness and that is consubstantial with the soul andinseparable from it That which characterizes me, and is regal and sovereign, is the power of intelligence and freewill. That which relates to my situation is what I

may choose in exercising my free will, such as whether to be a farmer, a merchant, a mathematician or aphilosopher. That which is external to me is whatever relates to my ambitions in this present life, to my class statusand worldly wealth, to glory, honor, prosperity and exalted rank, or to their opposites, poverty, ignominy, dishonorand misfortune.

38. When you know yourself you cease from all outward tasks undertaken with a view to serving God and enterinto the very sanctuary of God, into the noetic liturgy of the Spirit, the divine haven of dispassion and humility. Butuntil you come to know yourself through humility and spiritual knowledge your life is one of toil and sweat. It wasof this that David cryptically spoke when he said, 'Toil lies before me until 1 enter the sanctuary of God' (Ps. 73:16-17. LXX).

39. To know yourself means that you must guard yourself diligently from

everything external to you; it meansrespite from worldly concerns and cross-examination of the conscience. Once you come to know yourself a kind ofsuper rational divine humility suddenly descends upon the soul, bringing contrition and tears of fervent compunctionto the heart. Acted upon in this way you regard yourself as earth and ashes (cf Gen. 18:27), and as a worm and noman (cf. Ps. 22:6). Indeed, because of this overwhelming gift of God, you think you are unworthy of even thiswormlike form of life. If you are privileged to remain in this state for some time you will be filled with a strange.

unspeakable intoxication - the intoxication of compunction - and will enter into the depths of humility. Rapt out ofyourself, you take no account of food, drink or clothing beyond the minimum needed; for you are as one who hasexperienced the blessed change that comes from 'the right hand of the Most High' (Ps. 77:10. LXX).

40. Humility is the greatest of the virtues. If as a result of sincere repentance it is implanted in you, you will alsobe given the gift of prayer and self-control, and will be freed from servitude to the passions. Peace will suffuse yourpowers, tears will cleanse your heart, and through the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit you will be filled withtranquility. When you have attained this state, your consciousness of me knowledge of God will grow lucid and youwill begin to contemplate the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven and the inner essences of created things. The moreyou descend into the depths of the Spirit, the more you plumb the abyss of humility. Correspondingly

you gain greater knowledge of your own Imitations and recognize the weakness of human nature; at the same timeyour love for God and your fellow beings waxes until you think that sanctification flows simply from a greeting orfrom the proximity of those with whom you live.

41. Nothing so inspires the soul with longing for God and love for one's fellow beings as humility, compunctionand pure prayer. Humility shatters the spirit and

engenders tears, while by making us aware of the shortness ofhuman life it teaches us to know the frailty of our limitations. Compunction purifies the intellect of materiality,illumines the eye of the heart, and makes the soul completely radiant. Pure prayer binds the whole person to God,making us share the life of the angels, allowing us to taste the sweetness of the immortal blessings of God, andbestowing on us the treasures of the great mysteries. Enkindling us with love, it gives us the courage to lay down ourlife for our friends (cf John 15:13), for we have transcended the body's low estate.

42. Protect the pledge of enriching humility that has been entrusted to you, for in it are stored the hidden treasuresof love and the pearls of compunction. In it, too, the King, Christ our God, reposes as on a golden throne, bestowingthe gifts of the Holy Spirit on those it nourishes and giving them His great glories: consciousness of His divineknowledge. His ineffable wisdom, the vision of supernal realities, the prevision of human realities, the life-quickening deadness induced by dispassion, and union with Himself, so that we co-reign with Him in the kingdomof God the Father. For this accords with the petition He made to the Father, when He said on our behalf, 'Father, Idesire that those whom Thou hast given Me should be with Me wherever I am' (John 17:24).

43. If while striving to practice the commandments you suddenly feel an inexpressible secret joy that strangelyand unaccountably transforms you, alleviates the body's weight and puts from your mind all thought of food, sleepand the other necessities of nature, then you must know that all this is because God has come to dwell within you,inducing in you a life-quickening deadness and here and now raising you to the angelic state. The operative powerbehind this blessed life is humility; its mother and nurse, holy compunction; its friend and sister, the contemplationof the divine light; its throne, dispassion; its consummation. God the Holy Trinity.

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44. Once you have achieved this lofty state you cannot be constrained by sensory attachment to things. You arenot distracted by any of the delectations of this life,

nor do you regard some people as holy and others as unholy; butjust as God makes the rain fall and the sun shine equally on the just and on the unjust, on the evil and on the good(cf. Matt 5:45), so you irradiate love and diffuse its rays to all men. Pregnant though you are with love foreverything, yet your heart feels no distress or, rather, you are distressed and straitened because you cannot helpothers as much as you would wish. As from Eden, from you flows another spring of compunction, divided into thefour streams of humility, chastity, dispassion and undistracted prayer; and it waters the face of God's entire spiritualcreation (cf Gen. 2:10).

45. Those who have not tasted the sweetness of the tears of compunction and are ignorant of its grace and of howit operates, think that such tears differ in no way from those shed for the dead; and they invent all manner ofspecious reasons and pretexts for thinking this, such as might naturally occur to us. But when what was haughty inour intellect inclines towards humility, and when me soul has closed its eyes to the deceitfulness of visible thingsand aspires solely to the contemplation of the immaterial, primal light, repudiating all that derives from senseperception and receiving the grace bestowed by the Spirit, then as water from a spring tears at once gush from it andsweeten its senses, filling the mind with all manner of joy and divine light. More than this, they shatter the heart andmake the intellect humble in its contemplation of the higher world. These things cannot happen to those who lamentand mourn in another way.

46. Without the deepest humility you cannot release the spring of tears within you, nor can you be humblewithout the compunction that is quickened through the abiding presence of the Spirit. For humility engenderscompunction and compunction engenders humility through the Holy Spirit. It is as if these were strung together by asingle grace, linked by the unbreakable bond of the Spirit.

47. The light that enters the soul through the agency of the divine Spirit is liable to withdraw as a result of ourlaxity, negligence or perfunctormess in matters of food or speech. Carelessness over what we eat and an unstablediet, as well as an uncontrolled tongue and unguarded eyes, will naturally drive the light from the soul and plunge usinfo darkness. And once we are filled with darkness all the beasts in the wild places of our heart and our whelp-likepassion-imbued

thoughts rove raucously through it, seeking to feed on our impassioned prochvities and to despoil the treasuregarnered in us by the Spirit (cf Ps. 104 : 20-21). But the self-control that is truly dear to us and the prayer thatmakes us angels not only prevent such things from ranging through the soul; they also preserve unquenched the lightof the Spirit that encircles the intellect, pacify the heart and liberate the pure spring of divine compunction, openingthe soul to the love of God and binding it through joy and virginity entirely to Christ.

48. There is nothing so kindred to the divine Logos as the soul's purity and chasteness. Their mother is a devoutall-embracing self-control; and the father of this is fear. For once fear has changed to longing and is imbued withdesire for things divine, it makes the soul not only fearless and full of love for God, but also the very mother of thedivine Logos.

49. Once impregnated by fear, the soul becomes through repentance pregnant with the Logos of divine judgment;the birth-pangs of hell encompass it, heartfelt anguish and travail afflict it as it reflects on the retribution due for theevil it has done. Then, having through copious tears and labors gestated in the mind's womb the Spirit of salvation ithas conceived, it brings it forth into the world of the heart. Thus liberated from the pangs of hell and the anguish ofjudgment, the soul is joyously filled with longing for the blessings in store for it; purity and chasteness attend on itand, spurred by intense desire, unite it with God. Through this union it experiences an ineffable delight and shedsthe sweet pleasureful tears of compunction. Exempt from the ordinary forms of perception and as though in ecstasyfollowing the Bridegroom, it cries voicelessly, 'I pursue Thee in the fragrance of Thy myrrh; tell me, 0 Thou whommy soul loves, where Thou feedest Thy flock, where Thou givest it rest. In the noon-day of pure contemplation? Letme not be rejected from the flock of the righteous. With Thee are the illuminations of the great mysteries' (cf. Songof Songs 1:4-7). Once the Bridegroom has led the soul into the sanctuary of His hidden mysteries. He will initiate itwith wisdom into the contemplation of the inner essences of created things.

50. Do not say in your heart, it is now impossible for me to acquire a virginal purity, for I have succumbed in somany ways to the seduction and delirium of

the body. For once the soul engages fervently and strenuously in thelabors of repentance and we shed tears of compunction, then the prison-house is razed to the ground,

the fire of the passions is extinguished, we are spiritually reborn through the abiding presence of the Paraclete, andonce again the soul becomes a palace of purity and virginity. God, who is above nature, descends with light andineffable joy into the soul and sits on the heights of its intellect as upon a throne of glory, bestowing peace on all itsinner powers and saying: 'Peace be with you, peace from hostile passions. I give you My peace, so that you may actaccording to your true nature. I leave My peace with you, so that you may be perfected into what is beyond nature'(cf. John 14:27). Through His threefold gift of peace He heals the soul's three powers, brings it into triadicperfection and unites it with Himself. Thus He refashions it and makes it at one stroke wholly virginal, good andbeautiful through the fragrance of the myrrh of purity. Then he says to it, 'Arise. Come near to me, dove ofloveliness, through the practice of the virtues; for behold, the storm of the passions has passed. The downpour of

sensual pleasure-laden droughts is over, it has gone its way. The flowers of the virtues, redolent with intellections,have appeared in the soil of your heart (of Song of Songs, 2:10-12). Arise, come near to Me in the knowledgegleaned from the contemplation of the essences of created beings. Come, my dove, on your own wing into the over-canopying darkness of mystical theology, to the faith rooted rock-like in Me, your God.'

51. Blessed in my eyes is the man who, changed through the practice of the virtues, transcends the encompassingwalls of the passion-embroiled state and rises on the wings of dispassion - wings silver-toned with divine knowledge(cf. Ps. 68:13) - to the spiritual sphere in which he contemplates the essences of created things, and who from thereenters the divine darkness of theology where in the life of blessedness he ceases from all outward labors and reposesin God. For he has become a terrestrial angel and a celestial man; he has glorified God in

himself, and God willglorify him (cf. John 13:31-32).

52. 'Great peace have they who love God's law, and for them there is no stumbling-block' (cf Ps. 119:165). Fornot all things congenial to men accord with God; and some things that do not appear good are seen, by those whoknow the inner essences of things and events, to be by nature most excellent.

53. It behooves us to die to the world and live in Christ. Otherwise we cannot be spiritually bom anew - and, asthe Lord says, 'Unless you

are bom anew, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven' (cf John 3:3). Such a rebirth comes through obedience to aspiritual father, for if we do not first become pregnant with the seed of the Logos through the teaching of such afather and through him become children of God, we cannot be spiritually reborn. For in this way the twelve werebom of one, that is, of Christ; and the seventy were bom of the twelve and were made children of God the Father,according to our Lord's words, 'You are the children of My heavenly Father' (cf. Matt. 5:45). Thus St Paul, too, saysto us, 'For though you have ten thousand instructors, you have not many fathers; I have begotten you; be imitators ofme'(cf ICor. 4:15-16).

54. If you are not obedient to a spiritual father in imitation of the Son who was obedient to the Father even untodeath and the cross (cf. Phil. 2:8), you cannot be spiritually bom anew. If you do not become the beloved son of aholy father, and if you have not been bom anew in the Logos and the Spirit, how will you yourself become a holyfather and give birth to holy children who conform to the holiness of their father? And if this does not happen - well,'the tree is known by its fruit' (cf. Matt. 12:33).

55. Lack of faith is evil, the most diabolic issue of diabolic avarice and envy. And if it is evil, how much the moreso is the avarice that gives birth to it. For avarice impels men to love money more than they love Christ, to esteemwhat is material more highly than God, to worship creation rather than the Creator, and

to pervert God's truth into alie (cf. Rom. 1:25). If this disease is so evil that it can be called a second idolatry (cf. Col. 3:5). what exorbitance ofevil will the soul willingly sick with such a disease not surpass?

56. If you aspire to friendship with Christ, you wiU hate money and the gluttonous love of money; for moneylures towards itself the mind of whoever loves it and diverts it from love for Jesus, a love which, I think, isexpressed not in words but in action, in the carrying out of His commandments (cf. John 14:15). If, alas, what youwant is money, you will hoard away as much of it as you can, setting this desire for money above love for Christ,and regarding wealth as a gain and not as the greatest disaster that can befall you. You should realize, however, thatmoney is in fact disastrous to you, and the disaster will be all the greater because you will also lose your true wealth,God, without whom the life of salvation is impossible.

57. If you love money you do not love Christ; if you do not love[V4] 123

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Christ, but love money, think to whose likeness that tyrant will reduce you: it will make you like the disciple whowas unfaithful, who appeared to be a friend but was a traitor, who acted viciously towards the Master of All, andwho fell miserably from both faith and love, plunging into the depths of despair. Fear his example and listen to mycounsel: spurn money and love for money, so that you may gain the love of Christ. If not, well, you know the placeprepared for those who have fallen.

58. If you are not called by God to a high status, never try to attain it through money or human support or bydemanding it, even if you know you can help others. For if you do, three things lie in wait for you, and of them onewill surely happen: either God's anger and wrath will fall upon you in the form of diverse assaults and misfortunes -for not only men but virtually the whole of creation will turn on you, and your life will be full of anguish; or yourenemies will gain the upper hand and expel you from your position in deep disgrace; or you will die before yourtime, cut off from this present life.

59. You cannot be indifferent to both fame and disgrace, or rise above pleasure and pain, unless you are enabledby grace to perceive the upshot of all worldly preoccupations. For when you realize that the resultant of fame,pleasure, indulgence, wealth and prosperity is naught, since death and decay await them, then you will recognize theblatant vanity of all things worldly and will turn your eyes to the consummation of things divine. You will cleave tothe realities that truly exist and cannot perish; and, making these things your own, you will rise above pain andpleasure: above pain in that you have defeated that which in your soul loves pleasure, fame and money; abovepleasure, in that you have become impervious to worldly sensations. Thus you are the same whether you arehonored or scorned, attacked by bodily pain or endued with bodily ease. In all things you will give thanks to Godand you will not be cast down.

60. Those who have attained spiritual maturity can also analyze, the impulsions and proclivities of the soul, andcan guide and guard their inner state, on the basis of dreams. For bodily impulsions and the images in our intellectdepend upon our inner disposition and preoccupations. If your soul hankers after pleasure and material things, youwill dream about acquiring possessions and having money, about the female figure and sexual intercourse - all ofwhich leads to the soiling and defilement of soul and body. If you are haunted by images

of greed and avarice, you will see money everywhere, will get hold of it, and will make more money by lending itout at interest and storing the proceeds in the bank, and you will be condemned for your callousness. If you are hot-tempered and vicious, images of poisonous snakes and wild beasts will plague you and overwhelm you with terror.If you are fall of self-esteem, you will dream of popular acclaim and mass-meetings, government posts and highoffice; and even when awake you will imagine that these things, which as yet you lack, are already yours, or soonwill be. If you are proud and pretentious, you will see yourself being carried along in a splendid coach and evensometimes airborne, while everyone trembles at your great power. Similarly, if you are devoted to

God, diligent inthe practice of the virtues, scrupulous in the struggle for holiness and with a soul purged of material preoccupations,you will see in sleep the outcome of events and awe-inspiring visions will be disclosed to you. When you wake fromsleep you will always find yourself praying with compunction and in a peaceful state of soul and body, and therewill be tears on your cheeks, and on your lips words addressed to God.

61. The images that visit us during sleep are either dreams, or visions, or revelations. To the category of dreamsbelongs everything in the image-forming faculty of the intellect that is mutable - all that makes it confused andsubject to constantly altering states. We have nothing to gain from such images and if we are sensible we shouldignore them - indeed, they disappear of their own accord as soon as we awake. Visions on the other hand areconstant; the one does not change into another, but they remain imprinted upon the intellect unforgettably for manyyears. Those that disclose the upshot of things to come, and assist the soul by inspiring it with compunction and thesight of fearful wonders, make the beholder reflective and strike him with awe on account of their constancy andtheir fearsome nature. Hence they are treated with great seriousness by those skilled in spiritual matters. Revelationsoccur when the purified and illumined soul is able to contemplate in a way that transcends normal sense-perception.They have the force of things and thoughts miraculous and divine, initiating us into the hidden mysteries of God,showing us the outcome of our most important problems and the universal transformation of things worldly andhuman.

62. The first category - that of dreams - pertains to materialistic sensually-minded people who worship their belly(cf Phil. 3:19) and

are brash in their over-indulgence. Their dissolute, passion-polluted mode of life darkens their intellect, and they are

mocked and spellbound by the demons. The second category - that of visions -

pertains to those well advanced on thespiritual path, who have cleansed the soul's organs of perception. Beneficially assisted by things visible they ascendto the ever-increasing apprehension of things divine. The third category - that of revelations - pertains to those whoare perfect, who are energized by the Holy Spirit, and whose soul through mystical prayer is united to God.

63. Things seen in sleep are true and imprinted on the spiritual intellect in the case, not of everyone, but only ofthose whose intellect is purified, who have cleansed the soul's organs of perception and who are advancing towardthe contemplation of the inner essences of created things. Such people do not worry about day-to-day matters, norare they troubled about this present life. Through long fasts they have acquired an all-embracing self-control andthrough exertion and hardship they' have attained the sanctuary of God, the spiritual knowledge of created being andthe wisdom of the higher world. Their life is the life of angels and is hidden in God (cf Col. 5:3), their progress isbased upon holy stillness and on the prophets of God's Church. It is of them that God has spoken through Moses,when He said, 'If there be a prophet among you, I will appear to him in his sleep and will speak to him in a vision'(cf. Num. 12:6); and through Joel, when He said, 'And it will come to pass after these things that I will pour out Myspirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams and youryoung men shall see visions' (Joel 2:28).

64. Stillness is an undisturbed state of the intellect, the calm of a free and joyful soul, the tranquil unwaveringstability of the heart in God, the contemplation of light, the knowledge of the mysteries of God, consciousness ofwisdom by virtue of a pure mind, the abyss of divine intellections, the rapture of the intellect, intercourse with God,an unsleeping watchfulness, spiritual prayer, untroubled repose in the midst of great hardship and, finally, solidarityand union with God.

65. If the soul, its powers disordered, is still at war with itself and has not yet become receptive to the divine rays,if it is still enslaved to the will of the flesh and without peace; and if its battle with the rebellious passions has butrecently come to an end, it needs to

On the Inner Nature of Things and on the Purification of the Intellect:

preserve strict silence, so that with David it too can say: 'But I, as a deaf man, heard not; and I was as a dumb manwho does not open his mouth' (Ps. 38:13). It should always be full of grief and should walk son'owfully along theroad of Christ's commandments; for it is still afflicted by the enemy and awaits the coming of the Paraclete, throughwhom it will receive the prize of true freedom for its compunction and cleansing tears.

66. If you generate the honey of the virtues in stillness, you will through struggle and self-discipline transcend thelowly estate of man's fallen condition and by overcoming your presumption you will restore the soul's powers totheir natural state. Your heart purified by tears, you will now become receptive to the rays of the Spirit, will clotheyourself in the incomiption of the life-quickenmg deadness of Christ (cf 1 Cor. 15:53; 1 Cor. 4:10), and will receivethe Paraclete in tongues of fire in the upper room of your stillness (cf. Acts 2:3). You will then be under anobligation to speak unreservedly of the wonderful works of God (cf. Acts 2:11) and to 'declare His righteousness in

the great congregation' (cf. Ps. 40:10), for you will have received inwardly the law of the Spirit (cf. John 7:38; Rom.8:2); otherwise, like the wicked servant who hid the talent of his own master, you will be cast into eternal fire (cf.Matt. 25:30). Thus it was with David, when he washed away his sin through repentance and received once more thegift of prophecy; unable to conceal the blessings that he had received, he said to God, 'Behold, I will not seal mylips, as Thou, 0 Lord, knowest. 1 have not hidden Thy righteousness within my heart; 1 have declared Thy truth andThy salvation; 1 have not concealed Thy mercy and Thy truth from the great congregation' (Ps. 40:9-10).

67. An intellect totally purged of impurities is like a star-filled sky that illumines the soul with lucid intellections;and the Sun of righteousness (cf. MaL 4:2) shines within it, enlightening the world with divine knowledge. Cleansedin this way, the consciousness brings forth from the depths of wisdom the creative principles of things and thetransparent revelations of what is hidden, and in their pure and unalloyed state it sets them before the intellect, sothat it knows the depth, height and breadth of the knowledge of God (cf. Eph. 3:18). When the intellect hasinteriorized these principles and revelations and made them part of its own nature, then it will elucidate theprofundities of the Spirit to all who possess God's Spirit within

themselves, exposing the guile of the demons and expounding the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.

68. Bodily desires and the impulses of the flesh are checked by self-control, fasting and spiritual struggle. Psychicferments and the overweeningness of the heart are allayed by the reading of the Divine Scriptures and humbled byconstant prayer, while compunction like oil assuages them altogether.

69. Nothing so puts you in communion with God and unites you with the divine Logos as pure noetic prayer,when you pray undistractedly in the Spirit, your soul cleansed by tears, mellowed by compunction and illumined bythe light of the Spirit.

70. Quantity is very important in the prayerful recitation of psalms, provided that it is accompanied byperseverance and attentiveness; but the quality of our recitation is what gives life to the soul and makes it fruitful.Quality in psalmody and prayer consists in praying with the Spirit and with the intellect (cf 1 Cor. 14:15). We praywith the intellect when, as we say prayers and recite psalms, we perceive the meaning hidden in the Holy Scripturesand thence gamer in the heart a harvest of ever more exalted divine thoughts. Rapt spiritually by these thoughts intothe regions of light, the soul shines with a clear radiance, is further purified, rises wholly to the heavens, and beholdsthe beauty of the blessings held in store for the saints. Out of ardent longing for these blessings, tears - the fruit ofprayer - at once flow from our eyes, induced by the light-creating energy of the Spirit, their taste so sweet that inexperiencing them one may even forget to eat. This is the fruit of prayer, begotten through the quality of theirpsalmody in the soul of those who pray.

71. Where the fruit of the Spirit is present in a person, prayer is of a like quality; and where there is such quality,quantity in the recitation of psalms is excellent. Where there is no spiritual fruit, the quality is sapless. If the quality

is arid, quantity is useless: even if it disciplines the body, for most people there is no gain to be got from it.

72. As you pray and sing psalms to the Lord, watch out for the guile of the demons. Either they deceive us intosaying one thing instead of another, snatching the soul's attention and turning the verses of the psalms intoblasphemies, so that we say things that we should not say; or, when we have started with a psalm, they cause us toskip to the end of it, distracting the intellect from what lies between; or else they make us return time and again tothe same verse, through absent-

mindedness preventing us from going on to what comes next; or, when we are in the middle of a psalm, theysuddenly blank out the intellect's memory of the sequence of the verses, so that we cannot even remember whatverse of the psalm it was that we were saying, and thus we repeat it once more. This they do to make us neglectfuland listless, and to deprive us of the fruits of our prayer by persuading us that we cannot go on because of thelateness of the hour. We should persevere strongly, however, and continue the psalm more slowly, so that throughcontemplation we may reap the profit of prayer from the verses and become rich with the light of the Holy Spirit thatfills the souls of those who pray.

73. If something like this happens to you when you are 'singing with understanding' (cf Ps. 47:7), do not becomecursory or listless. Do not opt for bodily rest rather than the soul's profit, justifying this on the grounds that the houris late. But when you realize that your intellect has become distracted, stop the recitation; and although you may benear the end of the psalm, bravely go back to the beginning, diligently resume it, and recite it over again, even if,because of distraction, you have to repeat this process several times in a single hour. If you do this the demons,unable to bear your patient perseverance and your ardor, will be put to shame and will leave you.

74. Unceasing prayer is prayer that does not leave the soul day or night. It

consists not in what is outwardlyperceived - outstretched hands, bodily stance, or verbal utterance - but in our inner concentration on the intellect'sactivity and on mindfulness of God bom of unwavering compunction; and it can be perceived noetically by thosecapable of such perception.

75. You can devote yourself constantly to prayer only when your thoughts are mustered under the command ofthe intellect, delving in profound peace and reverence into the depths of God and seeking therein to taste the sweetwaters of contemplation. When this peace is not present, such prayer is impossible. Only when your soul's powersare pacified through spiritual knowledge can you attain constant prayer.

76. If while you are singing a song of prayer to God, one of your brethren knocks at the door of your cell, do notopt for the work of prayer rather than that of love and ignore your brother, for so to act would be alien to God. Goddesires love's mercy, not the sacrifice of prayer (cf. Hos. 6:6). Rather, put aside the gift of prayer and speak

with healing love to your brother. Then with tears and a contrite heart once more offer your gift of prayer to thefather of the spiritual powers, and a righteous spirit will be renewed within you (cf. Matt. 5:23-24: Ps. 51:10, 17).

77. The mystery of prayer is not consummated at a certain specific time or place. For if you restrict prayer toparticular times or places, you will waste the rest of the time in vain pursuits. Prayer may be defined as the intellect'sunceasing intercourse with God. Its task is to engage the soul totally in things divine, its fulfillment - to adapt thewords of St Paul (cf. 1 Cor. 6:17) - lies in so wedding the mind to God that it becomes one spirit with Him.

78. Even though you have died to your worldly self, and even though life has been generated in your soul by theHoly Spirit and God has granted you supernal gifts, you should still not leave your mind unoccupied. Accustom it tothink

continually on your past sins and the torments of hell, and regard yourself as one condemned. If you concernyourself with these things and look on yourself in this way, you will preserve a contrite spirit and within you aspring of compunction will flow with divine grace. God will have regard for your heart and will support it with HisSpirit.

79. Controlled fasting, accompanied by vigils, meditation and prayer, quickly brings you to the frontiers ofdispassion. At this point your great humility releases the spring of tears within you and you bum with love for God.When you have reached this state, you enter the peace of the Spirit that transcends every dauntless intellect (cf. Phil.4:7) and through love you are united to God.

80. No king so rejoices over his glory and kingdom, or so exults in his power, as does a monk over the dispassionof his soul and over his tears of compunction. For the king's jubilation will wither with his kingdom, while the monkwill be accompanied for limitless ages by the blessed dispassion and the joy he has attained. He moves like a wheelamong men during this present life, touching only lightly the earth and the things upon it - and then simply becausehis bodily needs demand it; his intellect ascending through this circling movement entirely into the celestial sphere,in his beginning is his end: and, crowned with humility, he bears in himself the fruits of grace. His table is repletewith the contemplation of the essences of created things, his drink is from the cup of Wisdom and his repose is inGod.

81. If you willingly engage in the labors of virtue and zealously[V4] 130

pursue the ascetic path, you will be granted great gifts by God. As you approach the halfway mark, you will receive

divine revelations and visions, and the greater your struggles the more full of tight and wisdom you will become. Atthe same time, the greater the heights of contemplation you reach, the more you will provoke the destructive envy ofthe demons, for they cannot bear to see a human being attain an angelic nature. Hence they will deceitfully attackyou with thoughts of presumption. But if you

perceive their wiliness and, admonishing yourself, take refuge in thestronghold of humility, you will escape the havoc of pride and enter the haven of salvation. Failing this, andabandoned by God, you will be given over to punitive spirits; and because you did not willingly put yourself to thetest, they will chastise you against your will. Carnal and pleasure-loving, full of guile and rage, these spirits willcruelly humiliate you with their attacks until you recognize your own weakness and, stricken with grief, freeyourself from the rack, saying with David: 'It is good for me that Thou hast humiliated me, so that I may learn Thycommandments' (Ps. 119:71. LXX).

82. God does not want us always to be humiliated by the passions and to be hunted down by them like hares,making Him alone our rock and refuge (cf Ps. 104:18); otherwise He would not have affirmed, 'I have said, you aregods; and all of you are children of the Most High' (Ps. 82:6). But He wants us to run as deer on the high mountainsof His commandments (cf. Ps. 104:18. LXX), thirsting for the life-creating waters of the Spirit (cf. Ps. 42:1). For,they say, it is the deer's nature to eat snakes; but by virtue of the heat they generate through being always on themove, they strangely transform the snakes' poison into musk and it does them no harm. In a similar manner, whenpassion-imbued thoughts invade our mind we should bring them into subjection through our ardent pursuit of God'scommandments and the power of the Spirit, and so transform them into the fragrant and salutary practice of virtue.In this way we can take every thought captive and make it obey Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 10:5). For the celestial world mustbe filled, not with people who are materialistic and imperfect, but with those who are spiritual and perfect - thosewho have advanced to the stature of perfect manhood in the fullness of Christ (cf. Eph. 4:13).

83. A person who keeps turning round and round on the same spot and does not want to make any spiritualprogress is like a mule that

walks round and round a well-head operating a water-wheel. Always to be battling with your carnal proclivities andto be concerned only with disciplining

the body through various forms of ascetic labor is to mistake God's purposeand unwittingly to inflict great damage on yourself. 'The gain to be derived from bodily discipline is but limited',says St Paul (1 Tim. 4:8) - at any rate as long as the earth-bound will of the flesh has not been swallowed up in tearsof repentance, as long as the life-quickening deadness of the Spirit has not supervened in our body, and the law ofthe Spirit does not reign in our mortal flesh. But trae devotion of soul attained through the spiritual knowledge ofcreated things and of their immortal essences is as a tree of life within the spiritual activity of the intellect: it is'profitable in all things' (cf. 1 Tim. 4:8) and everywhere, bestowing purity of heart, pacifying the soul's powers,giving light to the intellect and chastity to the body, and conferring restraint, all-embracing self-control, humility,compunction, love, holiness, heavenly knowledge, divine wisdom, and the contemplation of God. If, then, as a resultof great spiritual discipline you have attained such perfection of true devotion you will have crossed the Red Sea of

the passions and will have entered the promised land, from which flow the milk and the honey of divine knowledge(cf. Exod. 3:8), the inexhaustible delight of the saints.

84. If you persist in acting in a manner that is one-sided and of but limited profit and do not choose to do what isbeneficial in every way, you still - in conformity to God's high decree - eat coarse bread in the sweat of your brow(cf. Gen. 3:19). Your soul feels no appetite for the spiritual manna and the honey that flows for Israel from thecloven rock (cf. Deut. 32:13; Ps. 81:16). If, however, you have heard the words, 'Arise, let us go hence' (John14:31); if, in answer to the Master's call, you lay aside assiduous labor and stop eating the bread of pain, repudiatingmerely material perception and tasting the bowl of God's wisdom, then you will know that Christ is the Lord; for,having fulfilled the law of the commandments through ministering to the divine Logos, you will have ascended intothe upper chamber and will be awaiting the coming of the Paraclete (cf. Acts 2:1-4).

85. We must ever progress according to the ranks and nmgs of a life dedicated to wisdom and rise assiduouslytowards the higher world, always advancing towards God and never static in our aspiration towards supernal beauty.We must advance from ascetic practice to the contemplation of the essences of created beings, and

thence to the mystical knowledge of the divine Logos. There we may relinquish all external forms of bodilydiscipline, since we will have risen above the body's lowly state and will have been granted the lucidity of truediscrimination. If we have not yet been granted that lucidity we will not know how to take the next step and pursuewhat is more perfect. We will be in an even worse condition than those 'in the world'; for many of them do not setany limit to their ambitions, and do not halt in their ascent, until they have reached the highest rank of all; and onlythen do they rest satisfied.

86. Cleansed through fervent ascetic labor, the soul is illumined by divine light and begins little by little toperceive the natural beauty which God originally bestowed on it and to expand in love for its Creator. And asthrough its purification the rays of the Sun of righteousness grow more lucid in it, and as its natural beauty isincreasingly revealed to it and recognized, so in order to become yet more pure it extends its ascetic practice. In thisway it acquires a clear vision of the glory of the gift it has received, regains its former nobility and restores to itsCreator His own image pure and unalloyed. And it continues to add to its labors until it has cleansed itself of everystain and impurity and is privileged to contemplate and commune with God.

87. 'Open my eyes and I will perceive the wonders of Thy law' (Ps. 119:18). So he who is still bedarkened by hisearth-bound will cries out to God. For the ignorance of the worldly mind, all murk and obscurity, blots out the soul'svision, so that it cannot grasp things either divine or human; it cannot perceive the rays of divine light or enjoy theblessings that 'the eye has not seen, and the ear has not heard, and man's heart has not grasped' (1 Cor. 2:9). Butwhen through repentance its vision has been restored, it sees these things clearly, hears them with understanding andintuits them intellectually. Not only this, but it also assimilates more exalted things which, prompted by theseintellections, arise in its heart; and, having tasted their sweetness, its knowledge grows more lurid. It can then, in the

light of God's wisdom, explain to all the nature of the divine blessings 'that God has prepared for those who loveHim' (1 Cor. 2:9); and it exhorts all to follow the path of struggle and tears in order to share in them.

88. Scripture enumerates seven gifts of the Spirit, beginning with wisdom and ending with the divine fear of theSpirit; for it speaks of

'the spirit of wisdom, the spirit of understanding, the spirit of counseling, the spirit of strength, the spirit of divineknowledge, the spirit of reverence, the spirit of the fear of God' (cf. Isa. 11:2). But we for our part should begin withthe fear that purifies - that is to say, with the fear of punishment; in this way, first repudiating evil and throughrepentance expunging the squalor of sin, we may attain the pure fear of the Spirit. Having once attained it, we maylay aside all our struggles for virtue.

89. If you begin with fear of judgment and through tears of repentance advance towards purity of heart, you willfirst be filled with wisdom, since, as it is written, fear is 'the beginning of wisdom' (Prov. 1:7). You will then be filledsimultaneously with the spirit of understanding and of counseling, and this will enable you to resolve matters in theway that is best for yourself. Having reached this stage through the practice of the commandments, you thenadvance to the spiritual apperception of created being and receive the most exact comprehension of things divineand human. Thereafter, entirely transformed into a tabernacle of holiness, you ascend to the citadel of love and aremade perfect. At once the pure fear of the Spirit lays hold of you, so that you may guard the treasure of the kingdomof heaven of which you have become the repository. Such tear possesses great saving power; for when you havebeen exalted to the pinnacle of God's love it makes you fearful and full of disquiet lest you lapse from this love andare cast once more into the terrible fear of punishment.

90. The reading of the Scriptures means one thing for those who have but recently embraced the life of holiness,another for those who have attained the

middle state, and another for those who are moving rapidly towardsperfection. For the first, the Scriptures are bread from God's table, strengthening their hearts (cf. Ps. 104:15) in theholy struggle for virtue and filling them with forcefulness, power and courage in their battle against the spirits thatactivate the passions, so that they can say, 'For me Thou hast prepared a table with food against my enemies' (Ps.23:5). For the second, the Scriptures are wine from God's chalice, gladdening their hearts (cf. Ps. 104:15) andtransforming them through the power of the inner meaning, so that their intellect is raised above the letter that killsand led searchmgly into the depths of the Spirit (cf. 2 Cor. 3:6; 1 Cor. 2:10), In this way they are enabled to discoverand give birth to the inner meaning, so that fittingly they can exclaim, 'Thy chalice makes me drunk as with

the strongest wine' (Ps. 23:5. LXX). Finally, for those approaching perfection the Scriptures are the oil of the HolySpirit (cf. Ps. 104:15), anointing the soul, making it gentle and humble through the excess of the divine illuminationthey bestow, and raising it wholly above the lowliness of the body, so that in its glory it may cry, 'Thou hastanointed my head with oil' (Ps. 23:5) and 'Thy mercy shall follow me all the days of my life' (Ps. 23:6).

91. So long as we dedicate ourselves to God through keeping the commandments in the sweat of our brow, and inthis way diminish the passions of the flesh, the Lord sups with us at the table of His gifts on the heart-strengtheningdaily bread that is cultivated through the practice of the virtues. But when by attaining dispassion we hallow Hisname (cf. Matt. 6:9), and He Himself reigns in all the faculties of our soul, having brought under control andpacified what was in a state of schism - having, that is to say, subjected our lower consciousness to our higherconsciousness - and when in this way His will is done in us as it is in heaven (cf. Matt. 6:10), then He drinks with usin His kingdom - which is now actively present within us - an inconceivable new drink (cf Mark 14:25), the drink ofthe wisdom of the Logos mingled with compunction and the knowledge of the great mysteries. And once we

havebecome partakers of the Holy Spirit, transformed through the renewing of our intellect (cf. Rom. 12:2), then as GodHe will dine with us as gods: for He renders immortal what He has made His own.

92. When the unbridled water of the intellect's passion-charged thoughts has been bridled through the abidingpresence of the Holy Spirit, and the brine-bitter abyss of indecent images and desires has been brought intosubjection through self-control and meditation on death, then the divine spirit of repentance begins to blow and thewaters of compunction pour forth; and our God and Master, channeling them into the basin of repentance, washesour spiritual feet, making them worthy to walk in the courts of His kingdom.

93. The Logos of God, having taken flesh and given our nature subsistence in Himself, becoming perfect man,entirely free from sin, has as perfect God refashioned our nature and made it divine. As Logos of the primal Intellectand God, He has united Himself to our intelligence, giving it wings so that it may conceive divine, exalted thoughts.Because He is fire. He has with true divine fire steeled the incensive power of the soul against hostile passions anddemons.

Aspiration of all intelligent being and slaker of all desire. He has in His deep-seated love dilated the appetitiveaspect of the soul so that it can partake of the blessings of eternal life. Having thus renewed the whole man inHimself, He restores it in an act of re-creation that leaves no grounds for any reproach against the Creator-Logos.

94. Performing in Himself the sacred mystery of our re-creation, the Logos offered Himself up on our behalfthrough His death on the cross, and He continually offers Himself up, giving His immaculate body to us daily as asoul-nourishing banquet, so that by eating it and by drinking His precious blood we may through this participation

consciously grow in spiritual stature. Communicating in His body and blood and

refashioned in a purer form, we areunited to the twofold divine-human Logos in two ways, in our body and in our deiform soul; for He is God incarnatewhose flesh is the same in essence as our own. Thus we do not belong to ourselves, but to Him who has united us toHimself through this immortal meal and has made us by adoption what He Himself is by nature.

95. If, then, tested in the labors of virtue and purified by tears, we come forward and eat of this bread and drink ofthis cup, the divine-human Logos in His gentleness is commixed with our two natural faculties, with our soul andbody; and as God incarnate, one with us in essence as regards our human nature. He totally refashions us in Himself,wholly deifying us through divine knowledge and uniting us with Himself as His brothers, conformed to Him who isGod coessential with the Father. If, however, we are denied with the materiality of the passions and soiled with sin.He visits us with His natural sin-devouring fire, igniting and consuming us entirely, and cutting us off from life, notbecause in His goodness He wishes to do this, but because He is constrained to do it by our indifference and lack ofspiritual perception.

96. Invisibly the Lord draws near to all who by practicing the virtues have begun to travel the path of Hiscommandments, and He keeps them company even though they are as yet imperfect in understanding and stillunsure as to the true nature of virtue. Rightly are the eyes of their soul impeded, so that they do not recognize theirown progress even though the Lord accompanies them, co-operates with them in their efforts to be liberated fromthe passions, and assists them in the attainment of every form of virtue. For although they advance in the struggle forholiness, and through humility approach

the state of dispassion, the Logos does not want them to come to a hah, exhausted by their labors; rather He wishesthem to advance still further and to rise to the state of contemplation. Thus, having nourished them in moderation onthe bread of tears. He blesses them with the light of compunction and opens their intellect so that they canunderstand the profundities of Holy Scripture and

thus perceive the nature and inner essence of everything thatexists. At this point He abruptly withdraws from them so that they will be put on their mettle and will seek morezealously to learn what is meant by the spiritual knowledge of things and what is the exaltation that it brings.Prompted thus to pursue this knowledge more diligently, they become ministers of the Logos in a yet higher wayand proclaim to all the resurrection consummated through the practice of the virtues and the contemplation of theLogos (cf Luke 24:13-35).

97. The Logos justifiably rebukes the tardiness of those who drag out their time in the practice of the virtues anddo not wish to advance beyond this and rise to the higher state of contemplation. 'Fools and slow of heart,' He callsthem (Luke 24:25) - slow to place their trust in Him who can reveal the meaning of the contemplation of the innerprinciples of the created world to all who spiritually explore the depths of the Spirit. For not to wish to progressfrom the initial struggles to those that are more advanced, and to pass from the 'exterior' or literal meaning of HolyScripture to its inner or spiritual meaning, is a sign of the sluggish soul, one with no taste for spiritual profit and

extremely resentful about its own advancement. Such a soul, since its lamp has gone out, will not only be told to goand buy oil from those that sell it; but, finding the bridal chamber closed to it, it will also hear the words, 'Go away, Ido not know you or whence you come' (cf. Matt. 25: 9,12).

98. When the Logos of God enters a fallen soul - as He entered the city of Bethany (cf. John 11: 17) - in order toresurrect its intellect, sin-slain and buried under the corruption of the passions, then sound understanding and justice,plunged into grief by the intellect's death, come as mourners to meet Him, and they say, 'Hadst Thou been here withus, guarding and keeping watch, our brother intellect would not have died because of sin' (cf. John 11:32). Thenjustice will anxiously tend the Logos through the practice of the virtues and will want to prepare a menu of variouskinds of hardship; but sound understanding, laying aside all other concerns and ascetic endeavors,

will devote itself solely to spiritual labor, cleaving to the spiritual discourse of the Logos and attentive to theintellections arising from its contemplation of Him. Thus although the Logos acknowledges justice and its efforts tonourish Him generously through various forms of practical activity. He still rebukes it for always being anxiousabout so many outward labors and for engaging in what is of but limited profit (cf 1 Tim. 4:8). One thing only isneeded in order to serve the Logos, and that is the subjection, through the labors of virtue, of the lowerconsciousness to the higher consciousness, and the transformation of the soul's earth-bound propensity into spiritualaspiration. Sound understanding, however, the Logos praises, and unites with Himself in a manner that accords withHis nature, for it has chosen 'the better portion' - the knowledge of the Spirit whereby, transcending things human, itpenetrates into the depths of the Divine. Here to its great profit it procures the pearl of the Logos (cf. Matt. 13:45-46), beholds the hidden treasures of the Spirit (cf. Matt. 13:44), and is filled with an inexpressible joy that will notbe taken away from it (cf. Luke 10:38-42).

99. The intellect that has been slain by the passions and again brought to life by the indwelling presence of thedivine Logos has thrown off the grave-stone of torpid insensibility and has been freed from the shroud of sin andfrom corrupting thoughts by the servants of the Logos, fear of punishment and ascetic labor. Having tasted the lightof eternal life, it is released into dispassion (cf. John 11:38-43). Henceforward it enthrones itself over the senses and,having in purity celebrated the mystery of initiation, consorts with Christ the Logos, rising with Him from the earthto heaven, and reigning with Him in the kingdom of God the Father, all its desires quenched.

100. The restitution that will be consummated in the age to come after the dissolution of the body becomes clearlyevident even now, through the inspiration and inner activity of the Spirit, in those who have truly striven, havetraversed the midpoint of the spiritual path, and been made perfect according to 'the measure of the stature of thefullness of Christ' (Eph. 4:13). Their joy is eternal, in eternal light and their blessedness is of that final state. Forceaseless joy possesses the hearts of those who in this present life are rightly fighting the spiritual fight, and thegladness of the Holy Spirit embraces them - a gladness which, according to our Lord's words, will not be taken awayfrom them (cf. Luke 10:42). Thus he who in this present life is

Nikitas Stithatos

On the Inner Nature of Things and on the Purification of the Intellect:

One Hundred Texts

privileged to experience the abiding presence of the Paraclete, and through the cultivation of the virtues delights inHis fruits and is enriched by His divine gilts, is filled with joy and with all love, for fear has entirely left him.Joyously is he released from the bonds of the body and joyously he transcends the world of visible things, beingalready freed from his sensory attachment to them. He reposes in the inexpressible joy of the light m which dwell allwho rejoice (cf. Ps. 87:7. LXX), even if his body often experiences pain at its dissolution and at the severing of itsunion with the soul, and suffers in various ways, as a woman does during a difficult childbirth.

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Nikitas Stithatos

On Spiritual Knowledge,Love and the Perfection of Living:

One Hundred Texts

1. God is dispassionate Intellect, beyond every intellect and beyond every form of dispassion: He is Light and thesource of blessed light. He is Wisdom, Intelligence and spiritual Knowledge, and the giver of wisdom, intelligenceand spiritual knowledge. If on account of your purity these qualities have been, bestowed on you and are richlypresent in you, then that Within you which accords with the image of God has been safely preserved and you arenow a son of God guided by the Holy Spirit; for 'all who are guided by the Spirit of God are sons of God' (Rom.8:14).

2. Those who through ascetic practice cleanse themselves 'from all pollution of the flesh and spirit' (2 Cor. 7:1)receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit and so become vessels of immortal reality. Having attained this level they arefilled with the light of glory. Their hearts now serene and at peace, they utter blessed words, and God's wisdom -knowledge of things divine and human - flows from their tips, while their intelligence undisturbed interprets theprofundities of the Holy Spirits Once they have been united with God and have experienced a

blessedtransformation, the law is no longer binding on such people (cf Gal. 5:23).

3. He who wholeheartedly and assiduously directs himself towards God attains such virtue of soul and body thathe becomes a mirror of the divine image. He is so commixed with God, and God with him, that each reposes in theother. Because of the richness of the gifts of the Spirit that he has received, henceforth he is and appears to be animage of divine blessedness and god by adoption, God being the perfector of his perfection.

4. Only in ignorance would one claim that man is created in the image of God with respect to the organic

structure of his body. He is in[V4] 140

the image by virtue of the spiritual nature of his intellect, which is not circumscribed by the dead weight of the body.Since the divine nature is outside every created being and all material grossness, it is not circumscribed, but isunlimited and incorporeal, beyond substance and all condition, without qualities, impalpable, unquantifiable,invisible, immortal, incomprehensible and totally beyond our grasp. Similarly, the spiritual nature given to us byGod is uncircumscnbed and outside the material grossness of this world, and so is incorporeal, invisible, impalpable,incomprehensible, and an image of His immortal and eternal glory.

5. Since God, as sovereign King of all, is primordial Intellect, He possesses within Himself His Logos and HisSpirit, coessential and coetemal with Him. He is never without the Logos and the Spirit because the divine nature isone and indivisible; nor is He to be confused with Them, for the three hypostases in God are distinct andunconfusable. Hence in naturally begetting the Logos from His essence, the Father is not Severed from Him, sinceHe is Himself indivisible. The coetemal Logos, not severed from His Begetter, possesses the Spirit, who proceedseternally from the Father (cf. John 15:26) and shares with the Logos the same unoriginate nature. For the nature ofboth Logos and Spirit is one and

undivided, even though by virtue of the distinction of hypostases the one God isdivided into persons and is glorified as die Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Yet the persons, since Theyconstitute one nature and one God, are never separated from the co-eternal essence and nature. Observe, then, animage of this trihypostatic and single divine nature in man, who is created by this nature and is the image of it, notaccording to his visible self but according to his spiritual self, not according to what is mortal and perishable in himbut according to what is immortal and ever the same.

6. God is Intellect and transcends the creatures that in His Wisdom He has created; yet He also changelesslybegets the Logos as their dwelling-place, and, as Scripture says (cf. John 14:26), sends the Holy Spirit to endowthem with power. He is thus both outside everything and within everything. Similarly, man participates in the divinenature, and according to his spiritual self-that is to say, as a spiritual, incorporeal and immortal soul - is an image ofGod, and possesses an intellect which naturally begets consciousness from its essence; and by virtue of all this hemaintains the power of the body.

He is thus both outside matter and visible things and within them. And just as the Father who created man isinseparable from the other two hypostases - that is, from the Logos and the Spirit - so man's soul is indivisible fromhis intellect and his consciousness, for they are of one nature and essence - an essence uncircumscnbed by the body.

7. Since the Deity is worshipped in the three hypostases of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the image fonned by Him- man, that is - also subsists in a tripartite division, worshipping God, the Creator of all things out of things that arenot, with soul, intellect and consciousness. Thus, things by nature coetemal and coessential within God are alsointrinsic to and coessential with His image. They constitute the divine image in us and through them I am an imageof God, even though I am a composite of clay and divine image.

8. The image of God is one thing, and that which is contemplated in the miage is another. For the image of God isthe noetic soul, the intellect and the consciousness, which form one indivisible nature. What is contemplated in theimage is that which is sovereign, royal and self-determinative. Thus the glory of the intellect is one thing, its dignityis another, its being in the image of God is another, and its being in His likeness is another (cf. Gen. 1:26). The gloryof the intellect is its power of ascent, its constant movement upwards, its acuity, purity, understanding, wisdom andimmortality. The dignity of the intellect lies in its intelligence, its royal and sovereign nature, and its power of self-determination. Its being in the image of God resides in the self-subsistence of soul, intellect and consciousness andin their coessentiality, indivisibility and inseparability. For intellect and consciousness belong to the incorporeal,immortal, divine and noetic soul; these three are coessential and coetemal, and can never be divided or separatedfrom each other. The intellect's being in the likeness of God resides in its justice, truthfulness, love, sympathy andcompassion. When these qualities are energized and guarded in a person, that which is in the image and likeness ofGod is clearly manifest in him; he acts, that is to say, in accordance with nature and enjoys a higher dignity thanothers.

9. The tripartite deiform soul possesses two aspects, the one noetic and the' other passible. The noetic aspect,being in the image of the soul's Creator, is not conditioned by the senses, is invisible to them and is not limited bythem, since it is both outside them and within them. It is by virtue of this aspect that the soul communicates withspiritual and

divine powers and, through the sacred knowledge of created beings, ascends naturally to God as to its archetype,thus entering into the enjoyment of His divine nature. The passible aspect is split up among the senses and is subjectto passions and prone to self-indulgence. It is by virtue of this aspect that the soul communicates with the world thatis perceptible to the senses and that fosters nutrition and growth; and in this way it breathes the air, experiences coldand

heat, and receives sustenance for self-preservation, life, growth and health. Since the passible aspect is modifiedby what it comes into contact with, it is sometimes incited by impulses contrary to nature and develops disordereddesires; at other times it is provoked and carried away by mindless anger, or is subject to hunger and thirst, to sorrowand pain, and finally to physical dissolution; it luxuriates in self-indulgence, but shrinks back from affliction. Thus it

is rightly called the passible aspect of the soul, since it is to be found in the company of the passions. When thenoetic aspect of the soul holds sway and this mortal aspect is swallowed up by the Logos of life (cf 2 Cor. 5:4), thenthe life of Jesus is also manifested in our mortal flesh (cf. 2 Cor. 4:11), producing in us the life-quickening deadnessof dispassion, and conferring the mcormption of immortality in response to our spiritual aspiration.

10. Prior to His creation of all things out of nothing, the Creator possessed in Himself the knowledge and theintrinsic principles and essences of all that He brought into existence, for He is sovereign over the ages and hasforeknowledge of them all. Correspondingly, when in His own image He fashioned man as the sovereign ofcreation. He endowed him with the knowledge and the intrinsic principles and essences of all created things. Thusthrough his creation man possesses the dry and cold qualities of the body's gastric fluid from the earth, the warm andmoist qualities of blood from air and fire, the moist and cold qualities of phlegm from water, the power of growthfrom plants, the power of nutrition from zoophytes, his passible aspect from the animals, his spiritual and noeticaspect from the angels, and finally, in order to exist and live, his immaterial breath - his incorporeal and immortalsoul, understood as intellect, consciousness and the power of the Holy Spirit - from God.

11. God created us in His image and likeness (cf. Gen. 1:26). We are in His likeness if we possess virtue andunderstanding; for 'His virtue covered the heavens, and the earth was full of His

understanding' (cf. Hab. 3:3). The virtue of God is His justice, holiness and truth: as David says, 'Thou an just, 0Lord, and Thy truth is round about Thee' (cf. Ps. 89:8. LXX); and again. The Lord is just and holy' (cf. Ps. 145:17).We are also in the likeness of God if we possess uprightness and goodness, for 'good and upright is the Lord' (Ps.25:8); or if we are conscious of wisdom and spiritual knowledge, for these are within Hun and He is called Wisdomand Logos; or if we possess holiness and perfection, since He Himself said, 'You must be perfect, as your heavenlyFather is perfect' (Matt. 5:48), and, 'You must be holy, for I am holy' (Lev. 11:44; 1 Pet. 1:16); or if we are humbleand gentle, for it is written, 'Learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for yoursouls'(Matt. 11:29).

12. Since our intellect is an image of God, it is true to itself when it remains among- the things that are properlyits own and does not divagate from its own dignity and nature. Hence it loves to dwell among things proximate toGod, and seeks to unite itself with Him, from whom it had its origin, by whom it is activated, and towards whom itascends by means of its natural capabilities; and it desires to imitate Him in His compassion and simplicity. Such anintellect even begets the Logos, and it recreates like new heavens the souls akin to it, strengthening them in thepatient practice of the virtues; and it bestows life on them through the spiritual power of its counsel, providing themwith the strength to resist destructive passions. If, then, it truly imitates God, it becomes itself also a creator both ofthe noetic world and of the macrocosm, and clearly hears God's words, 'He who extracts what is precious from whatis vile will be as My mouth' (cf. Jer. 15:19).

13. He who staunchly adheres to those activities of the intellect which accord with its nature and affirms thedignity of the intelligence, is kept unsullied by material preoccupations, is invested with gentleness, humility, loveand compassion, and is illumined by the Holy Spirit. His attention focused on the higher spheres of contemplativeactivity, he is initiated into the hidden mysteries of God, and through his words of wisdom he lovingly ministers tothose who are capable of learning about these things. In this way he does not use his talent solely for his ownbenefit, but also shares its benediction with his fellow-men.

14. Exalt the One over the dyad - the single over the dual - and[V4] 144

free its nobility from all commerce with dualism, and you will consort immaterially with immaterial spirits; for youwill yourself have become a noetic spirit, even though you appear to dwell bodily among other men.

15. Once you have brought bondage to the dyad into subjection to the dignity and nature of the One, you willhave subjected the whole of creation to God; for you will have brought into unity what was divided and will havereconciled all things.

16. So long as the nature of the powers within us is in a state of inner discord and is dispersed among manycontrary things, we do not participate in God's supernatural gifts. And if we do not participate in these gifts, we arealso far from the mystical euchanst of the heavenly sanctuary, celebrated by the intellect through its spiritualactivity. When through assiduous ascetic labor we have purged ourselves of the crudity of evil and have reconciledour inner discord through the power of the Spirit, we then participate in the ineffable blessings of God, and worthilyconcelebrate the divine mysteries of the intellect's mystical eucharist with God the Logos in His supracelestial andspiritual sanctuary; for we have become initiates and priests of His immortal mysteries.

17. Our fallen self desires in a way that opposes our spiritual self, our spiritual self in a way that opposes ourfallenself(cf Gal. 5:17);

and in this relentless warfare between the two each strives for victory and control over the other. This contrarietywithin us is also called 'discord', 'turning point', 'balance' and 'twofold struggle'; and if the intellect tips the balancetowards an act of human passion the soul is split asunder.

18. So long as we are reft by the turmoil of our thoughts, and so long as we are ruled and constrained by our fallenself, we are self-fragmented and cut off from the divine Monad, since we have not made our own the riches of itsunity. But when our mortality is swallowed up by the unifying power of the Monad and acquires a supernaturaldetachment, when the intellect becomes master of itself, illumined by its wisdom-engendering intellections, then thesoul, in sacred embrace with the One, is freed from discord and becomes a unity: enfolded into the divine Monad, itis unified in a godlike simplicity. Such is the nature of the

soul's restoration to its original state and such our renewalin a state yet more exalted.

19. Ignorance is terrible and more than terrible, a truly palpable

darkness (cf. Exod. 10:21). Souls suckled on ignorance are tenebrous, their thought is fragmented, and they are cutoff from union with God. Its upshot is inanity, since it makes the whole person mindless and insensate. Waxinggross, it plunges the soul into the depths of hell, where there is every kind of punishment and pain, distress andanguish. Conversely, divine knowledge is luminous and endlessly illuminating: souls in which it has beenengendered because of their purity possess a godlike radiance, for it fills them with peace, serenity, joy, ineffablewisdom and perfect love.

20. Simple and unified, the presence of divine light gathers within itself the souls that participate in it andconverts them to itself, uniting them with its own unity, and perfecting them with its own perfection. It leads them todescry the depths of God, so that they contemplate the great mysteries and become initiates and mystagogues.Aspire, then, to be punned utterly through ascetic labor, and you will see these mysteries dear to God - of which 1have spoken - actually at work within you.

21. The rays of primordial Light that illumine purified souls with spiritual knowledge not only fill them withbenediction and luminosity; they also, by means of the contemplation of the inner essences of created things, leadthem up to the noetic heavens. The effects of the divine energy, however, do not stop here; they continue untilthrough wisdom and through knowledge of indescribable things they unite purified souls with the One, bringingthem out of a state of multiplicity into a state of oneness in Him.

22. We must first purge ourselves of the vicious materiality prompted in us by the demons - this is the stage ofpurification; then, through the stage of

illumination, we must make our spiritual eyes lucid and ever light-filled, andthis is accomplished by means of the mystical wisdom hidden in God. In this way we ascend to the cognition ofsacred knowledge, which through the intelligence imparts things new and old to those who have ears to hear. Thenwe in our turn must pass on to others images and intimations of this knowledge, conveying its hidden meaning to thepurified while withholding it from the profane, lest holy things be given to dogs, or the pearl of the Logos be castbefore swine-like souls that would defile it (cf. Matt. 7:6).

23. When you become aware of increasing ardency in your inner faith and love for God, then you should knowthat you are bringing Christ to birth within yourself, and that it is He who exalts your soul

above terrestrial and visible things and prepares a dwelling-place for it in heaven. When you perceive that your heartis replete with joy, and poignantly longs for God's unutterable blessings, then you should realize that you areactivated by the divine Spirit. And when you sense that your intellect is full of ineffable light and the intellections ofsupernal Wisdom, then you should recognize that the Paraclete is present in your soul, disclosing the treasures of thekingdom of heaven hidden within you; and you should guard yourself strictly as a palace of God and as a dwelling-place of the Spirit.

24. Guardianship of the hidden treasure of the Spirit consists in that state of detachment from human affairswhich is properly termed stillness. When through purity of heart and Joyful compunction this stillness kindles a yetfiercer longing for God's love, it releases the soul from the bonds of the senses and impels it to embrace the life offreedom. Recalled to its natural state, the soul reorientates its powers, restoring them to their original condition.Thus it is evident that none of the evil that afflicts us as a result of our deviation and lapse from the divine imagemay be imputed to God. who creates only what is good.

25. It is stillness, full of wisdom and benediction, that leads us to this holy and

godlike state of perfection - when,that is, it is practiced and pursued genuinely. If an apparent hesychast has not attained this eminence and perfection,his stillness is not yet this noetic and perfect stillness. Indeed, until he has attained this eminence, he will not evenhave stilled the inner turbulence of the anarchic passions. All he will have is a body consisting of teguments, ventsand cavities, and wasted by a disordered and deluded mind.

26. Souls that have attained total purity, and have reached the heights of wisdom and spiritual knowledge,resemble the Cherabim. By virtue of their unmediated cognition they draw close to the source of all beauty andgoodness, and in this way they are directly and folly initiated into the vision of secret things. Among the spiritualpowers it is said that only the Cherubim are illuminated in this direct manner by the source of divinity itself and thuspossess this vision in the highest degree.

27. Among the highest angelic powers, some are more ardent and clear-sighted in their devotion to the divinerealities around which they

unceasingly circle; others are more contemplative, gnostic and imbued with wisdom, this being the divine state thatimpels them unceasingly to circle around these realities. Similarly, angel-like souls are ardent and clear-sighted intheir devotion to the divine realities, as well as wise, gnostic and exalted in mystical contemplation. Potentially andactually they too unceasingly circle around things divine, firmly rooted in them alone. Immutably receptive of divineilluminations, and thus participating in Him who truly is. they also unstmtmgly communicate His irradiance andgrace to others through their teaching.

28. God is Intellect and the activating agent of everything. All intellects have both their permanent abode andtheir eternal mobility in this primary Intellect. Such is the experience of all whose activity is not adulterated by

materiality but is pure and unsullied as a result of sacred ascetic labor. They

experience this when, ardent withdivine love, they communicate to each other and to themselves the illumination bestowed on them by the Divinity,generously transmitting to others the wisdom of God's mysteries concealed within it; and in this way theyunceasingly extol the divine love that inspires them.

29. Souls whose intelligence has been freed from material preoccupation, and in whom the self-warring appetitiveand incensive aspects have been restored to harmony and harnessed to their heaven-bound well-reined chariot, bothrevolve around God and yet stand fixedly. They revolve incessantly around God as the centre and cause of theircircular movement. They stand steadfast and unwavering as fixed points on the circumference of the circle, andcannot be diverted from this fixed position by the sense-world and the distraction of human affairs. This is thereforethe perfect consummation of stillness, and it is to this; that stillness leads those who truly achieve it, so that whilemoving they are stationary, and while steadfast and immobile they move around the divine realities. So long as wedo not experience this we can only be said to practice an apparent stillness, and our intellect is not free frommateriality and distraction.

30. When through great diligence and effort we recover the original beauty of the intelligence, and through theabiding presence of the Holy Spirit participate in supernal wisdom and knowledge, we can then perceive things asthey are by nature and hence can recognize that the source and cause of all things is itself wise and beautiful We seethat we cannot hold it in any way responsible for the evil that destroys created things when they deviate towardswhat is base. When we are

so deflected and dragged downwards, we are sundered from the pristine beauty of the Logos and forfeit ourdeification, while the evil that has invaded us disfigures us mto its own obtuse and witless form.

31. When through the practice of the virtues we attain a spiritual knowledge of created things we have achievedthe first stage on the path of deification. We

achieve the second stage when - initiated through the contemplation ofthe spiritual essences of created things -we perceive the hidden mysteries of God. We achieve the third stage whenwe are united and interfused with the primordial light. It is then that we reach the goal of all ascetic andcontemplative activity.

32. By means of these three stages all intellects are brought, in a way that accords with their own nature, intounity with themselves and with Him who truly is. They can then illumine their fellow-intellects, initiating them intodivine realities, through celestial wisdom perfecting them as spirits already purified, and uniting them withthemselves and with the One.

33. Deification in this present life is the spiritual and truly sacred rite in which the Logos of unutterable wisdommakes Himself a sacred offering and gives Himself, so far as is possible, to those who have prepared themselves.God, as befits His goodness, has bestowed this deification on beings endowed with intelligence so that they may

achieve the union of faith. Those who as a resuh of their purity and their knowledge of things divine participate inthis dignity are assimilated to God, 'conformed to the image of His Son' (Rom. 8:29) through their exalted andspiritual concentration upon the divine. Thus they become as gods to other men on earth. These others in their turn,perfected in virtue by purification through their divine intelligence and through sacred intercourse with God,participate according to their proficiency and the degree of their purification in the same deification as their brethrenand they commune with them in the God of unity. In this way all of them, joined together in the union of love, areunceasingly united with the one God; and God, the source of all holy works and totally free from any indictmentbecause of His work of creation, abides in the midst of gods (cf. Ps. 82:1. LXX), God by nature among gods byadoption.

34. You cannot be assimilated to God and participate in His ineffable blessings - in so far as this is possible -unless you first through fervent tears and through the practice of Christ's sacred commandments strip away theinterposing foulness and disfigurement

of sin. If you want spiritually to taste the sweetness and delight of things spiritual you must renounce all mundanesense-experience, and in your aspiration for the blessings held in store for the saints you must devote yourself to thecontemplation of the inner reality of created beings.

35. Assimilation to God, conferred upon us through intense purification and deep love for God, can be maintainedonly through an unceasing aspiration towards Him on the part of the contemplative intellect. Such aspiration is bomwithin the soul through the persistent stillness produced by the acquisition of the virtues, by ceaseless andundistracted spiritual prayer, by total self-control, and by intensive reading of the Scriptures.

36. We must strive not only to bring the soul's powers into a state of peace, but also to acquire a longing forspiritual serenity. For through the pacifying of our thoughts every aspiration for what is good is strengthened, whiledivine heaven-sent dew heals and revives the heart wounded by Spirit-enkindled celestial fire.

37. Once a soul deeply wounded by divine longing has experienced the balm of God's noetic gifts, it cannotremain static or fixed in itself, but will aspire to rise ever further towards heaven. The higher it rises through theSpirit and the farther it penetrates into the depths of God, the more it is consumed by the fire of desire; and itexplores in all their immensity the yet deeper mysteries of God, anxious to attain the blessed light where everyintellect is rapt out of itself and where - its goal achieved - it reposes in heartfelt joy.

38. When you come to participate in the Holy Spirit and recognize His presence through a certain ineffableenergy and fragrance withm yourself - this fragrance even spreading over the surface of your body - you can nolonger be content to remain within the bounds of the created world. On the contrary, having experienced the nobleconversion wrought by the 'right hand of the Most High' (Ps. 77:10. LXX), you forget food and sleep, transcendbodily needs, ignore physical repose and, after spending the whole day to ascetic toil, are yet unaware of stress or

duress, of hunger, thirst, sleep, or of any other physical need. For with unutterable joy God's love is poured outinvisibly into your heart (cf. Rom. 5:5). Wrapped the whole night in an illumination of fire, you accomplish

spiritualwork through the body and feast on the immortal fruits of the noetic paradise. It was into this paradise that St Paul,too, was caught up when he heard the

inexpressible words which no one is permitted to hear (cf. 2 Cor. 12:4) if still attached to the sense-world of visiblethings.

39. Once the body has been fired in the furnace of ascetic practice and tempered by the water of tears, it is nolonger dulled by hardship, for it is now exempt from outward labors and ceases from the great toil they demand.Immersed in the silence and serenity of inward peace, it becomes full of a new power, a new vigor, a new spiritualstrength. When the soul works hand in hand with such a body - one, that is to say, whose state transcends the needfor bodily discipline - it changes its physical labors into spiritual warfare. It promptly begins to perform spiritualwork, and guards in itself the immortal fruits of the noetic paradise, where the rivers of godlike intellection havetheir source, and where stands the tree of divine knowledge (cf. Gen. 2:9-10), bearing the fruits of wisdom, joy,peace, kindness, goodness, long-suffering and ineffable love (cf. Gal. : : 22). Working assiduously in this mannerand guarding what it harvests, the soul goes out of the body and enters into the darkness of mystical theology. Itleaves everything behind, not held back by anything belonging to the visible world; and, united with God, it ceasesfrom toil and grief.

40. Those engaged in spiritual warfare confront the question of which in us is the more noble: the visible or theintelligible? If it is the visible, there is nothmg in us more to be preferred or desired than what is corruptible, nor isthe soul more noble than the body. If it is the intelligible then we must recognize that 'God is spirit, and those whoworship Him must worship in spirit and in tnith' (John 4:24). Thus once the soul is firmly established in spiritualwork, freed from the downward pull of the body and rendered entirely spiritual through union with what is superiorto it, then bodily discipline is superfluous.

41. There are three stages on the spiritual path: the purgative, the illuminative and finally the mystical, throughwhich we are perfected. The first pertains to beginners, the second to those in the intermediate stage, and the third tothe perfect. It is through these three consecutive stages that we ascend, growing in stature according to Christ andattaining 'mature manhood, the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ'(Eph. 4:13).

42. The purgative stage pertains to those newly engaged in spiritual warfare. It is characterized by the rejection ofthe materialistic self, liberation from material evil, and investiture with the regenerate self, renewed by the HolySpirit (cf. Col. 3:10). It involves hatred of

materiality, the attenuation of the flesh, the avoidance of whatever incites the mind to passion, repentance for sinscommitted, the dissolving with tears of the bitter sediment left by sin, the regulation of our life according to thegenerosity of the Spirit, and the cleansing through compunction of the inside of the cup (cf Matt. 23:26) - theintellect - from every defilement of flesh and spirit (cf. 2 Cor. 7:1), so that it can then be filled with the wine of theLogos that gladdens the heart of the purified (cf. Ps. 104:15), and can be brought to the King of the celestial powersfor Him to taste. Its final goal is that we should be forged in the fire of ascetic struggle, scouring off the rust of sin,and steeled and tempered in the water of compunction, so that sword-like we may effectively cut off the passionsand the demons. Reaching this point through long ascetic struggle, we quench the fire within us, muzzle the brute-like passions, become strong in the Spirit instead of weak (cf. Heb. 11:33-34), and like another Job conquer thetempter through our patient endurance.

43. The illuminative stage pertains to those who as a result of their struggles have attained the first level ofdispassion. It is characterized by the spiritual knowledge of created beings, the contemplation of their inner essencesand communion in the Holy Spirit. It involves the intellect's purification by divine fire, the noetic opening of theeyes of the heart, and the birth of the Logos

accompanied by sublime intellections of spiritual knowledge. Its finalgoal is the elucidation of the nature of created things by the Logos of Wisdom, insight into divine and human affairs,and the revelation of the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (cf. Luke 8 : 10). He who has reached this pointthrough the inner activity of the intellect rides, like another Elijah (cf. 2 Kgs. 2:11), in a chariot of fire drawn by thequatemity of the virtues; and while still living he is raised to the noetic realm and traverses the heavens, since he hasrisen above the lowliness of the body.

44. The mystical and perfective stage pertains to those who have already passed through all things and have cometo 'the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ' (Eph. 4:13). It is characterized by the transcending of thesphere of demonic powers and of all sublunar things, by our attaining to the higher celestial ranks, approaching theprimordial light and plumbing the depths of God through the Spirit. It involves immersing our contemplativeintellect in the inner principles of providence, justice and truth, and also the interpretation of the

arcane symbolism, parables and obscure passages in Holy Scripture. Its final goal is our initiation into the hiddenmysteries of God and our being filled with ineffable wisdom through union with the Holy Spirit, so that each

becomes a wise theologian in the great Church of God, illuminating others with the inner meaning of theology. Hewho has reached this point through the deepest humility and compunction has, like another Paul, been caught up intothe third heaven of theology, and has heard indescribable things which he who is still dominated by the sense-worldis not permitted to hear (cf. 2 Cor. 12:4); and he experiences unutterable blessings, such as no eye has seen or earheard (cf 1 Cor. 2:9). He becomes a steward of God's mysteries (cf 1 Cor. 4:1), for he is God's mouthpiece, andthrough words he communicates these mysteries to other people; and in this he finds blessed repose. For he is nowperfected in the perfect God, united in the company of other theologians with the supreme angelic powers of theCherubim and Seraphim, in whom dwells the principle of wisdom

and spiritual knowledge.

45. Human life is divided into two forms, while its goals are subsumed under three categories. One form is socialand within the world, the other is solitary and transcends the world. Social life is characterized either by self-restraint or by insatiability; the solitary life is subdivided into three modes: the practice of the virtues, the spiritualcognition of created beings, and the indwelling of supernatural energy. Social life may be characterized by justice, inwhich case it accords with nature, or by injustice, in which case it is contrary to nature. The solitary life eitheraspires towards its goal in accordance with monastic precept and rule, and - perfected in a manner that transcendsnature - attains the Infinite; or else it is prompted by presumption and so is balked of its purpose, debases the mind,and fails to attain perfection.

46. The Spirit is light, life and peace. If consequently you are illumined by the Spirit your own life is imbued withpeace and serenity. Because of this you are filled with the spiritual knowledge of created beings and the wisdom ofthe Logos; you are granted the intellect of Christ (cf. 1 Cor. 2:16); and you come to know the mysteries of God'skingdom (cf. Luke 8:10). Thus you penetrate into the depths of the Divine and daily from an untroubled andillumined heart you utter words of life for the benefit of others; for you yourself are full of benediction, since youhave within you Goodness itself that utters things new and old (cf. Matt. 13:52).

47. God is Wisdom, and by deifying through the spiritual knowledge of created beings those who live in theLogos and in Wisdom He unites them with Himself through light and makes them gods by adoption. Since God hascreated all things out of nothing through Wisdom, He directs and administers all that is in the world throughWisdom, and likewise in Wisdom brings about the salvation of all who turn towards Him and draw near to Him.Similarly, whoever as a result of his purity has been enabled to participate in the highest Wisdom always as animage of God acts in Wisdom, and in Wisdom carries out the divine will.

Withdrawing himself from what isexternal and multiple, each day he raises his intelligence anagogically through the knowledge of unutterable thingsto a life that is truly angelic. Having unified his own life as far as possible, he unites himself with the angelic powersthat move in a unified way around God, and under their good guidance is elevated to the first Principle and Cause.

48. Once you have united yourself through the higher Wisdom with the angelic powers and have thereby beenunited with God, through love of Wisdom you enter into communion with all men, since you have achieved God's

likeness. Through divine power you sever those so disposed from their attachment to what is external and multiple,and as an imitator of God you concentrate them in spirit, elevating them as you are elevated to a unified life throughwisdom, spiritual knowledge and the illumination of divine mysteries, until they come to contemplate the glory ofthe unique primordial light. When you have united them with the essences and orders that surround God, you inductthem - wholly irradiated by the Spirit - to the unity of God Himself

49. Linked to the four cardinal virtues there is a group of eight natural and general virtues. Each cardinal virtue isaccompanied by two virtues from the second category, thus composing a triad. Sound understanding is accompaniedby spiritual knowledge and wise contemplation; justice by discrimination and sympathetic understanding; courageby patience and firm resolution; self-restraint by purity and virginity. From the throne of the intellect, in His wisdomGod presides like an architect and mystagogue over these twelve virtues divided into triads, and sends out the Logosto create them within us. From their underlying principles the Logos takes the substance of each of the virtues andcreates in the soul a numinous noetic world. He places sound understanding in the soul like a star-filled sky fromwhich

two great luminaries - divine knowledge and contemplation of spiritual essences - irradiate it with their light. Hemakes justice its firm foundation, rich like the

earth with every kind of sustenance. He puts self-restraint within it asthe air, cooling and refreshing it with a life free from all impurity. He sets courage like a sea around the weakness ofour nature, enabling us to undermine the strongholds and citadels of the enemy. In thus establishing this world theLogos fills the soul with the power of the Holy Spirit, so as to maintain it in unceasing noetic activity and inindissoluble and enduring unity. As the Psalmist expresses it, 'By the Logos of the Lord are the heavens established,and all their power lies in the Spirit that comes from Him' (Ps. 33:6. LXX).

50. Our spiritual growth corresponds to the different stages in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ. While we areinfants in need of milk (cf. Heb. 5:12) we are suckled on the milk of the introductory virtues acquired through bodilydiscipline; yet this is of but limited profit (cf. 1 Tim. 4:8) to us once we begin to grow in virtue and gradually leaveour infancy behind. When we attain adolescence and are nourished by the solid food of the contemplation of thespiritual essences of things - for our soul's organs of perception are now well attuned (cf. Heb. 5:14) - it may be saidthat we increase in stature and in grace (cf. Luke 2:52), and sit among the elders (cf. Luke 2:46), disclosing to themthings hidden in the depths of darkness (cf. Job 12:22). When we have reached 'mature manhood, the measure of thestature of the fullness of Christ' (Eph. 4:13), we proclaim to all the meaning of repentance, teach others about thekingdom of heaven (cf Matt. 4:17) and press on towards the Passion (cf. Luke 12:50). For this is the ultimate goalof everyone who has reached perfection in the practice of the virtues: after passing through all the different ages ofChrist he finally undergoes the trials that Christ suffered on the cross.

51. So long as we are learning the basic principles of bodily discipline, watching ourselves carefully when wetaste food, or touch things, or gaze at beautiful objects, or listen to music, or smell fragrances, we are under

guardians and trustees; for we are still infants, even though we are also heirs and lords of all that belongs to theFather. But when the time of such training is over and we have attained dispassion, the Logos is bom within us as aresult of our purity of mind, and He submits to the law of the Spirit, so that He may redeem us who are under thelaw of the will of the flesh and may grant us the status of sonship. When this has taken place, the Spirit cries in ourhearts.

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'Abba! Father!', making this status known to us and revealing to us our intimate communion with the Father. And Heabides in us and converses with us as sons and heirs of God through Christ, free from servitude to the senses (cf.Gal. 4:1-6).

52. For those who like Peter have advanced in faith, and like James have been restored in hope, and like Johnhave achieved perfection in love, the Lord ascends the high mountain of theology and is transfigured (cf. Matt.17:1). Through the disclosure and expression of His pure teaching He shines upon them as the sun, and with theintellections of His unutterable wisdom He becomes radiant with light. They see the Logos standing between Mosesand Elijah - between law and prophecy - promulgating the law and teaching it to them, and at the same timerevealing to them through vision and prophecy the depths and the hidden treasures of wisdom. The Holy Spiritovershadows them like a luminous cloud, and from the cloud they hear the voice of mystical theology, initiatingthem into the mystery of the tri-hypostatic Divinity and saying, 'This is My beloved, the Logos of perfection mademanifest, in whom I take delight. Become for Me perfect sons in the perfect Spirit' (cf. Matt. 17:1-5).

53. A soul that disdains everything unspiritual and that is wholly wounded by love for God undergoes a strangedivine ecstasy. Having clearly grasped the inner nature and essence of created beings, as well as the upshot ofmatters human, it cannot bear to be imprisoned or circumscribed by anything. On the contrary, surpassing its ownlimitations, rebelling against the fetters of the senses and transcending all creatureliness, it penetrates the divinedarkness of theology in unutterable silence and - to the degree that grace permits - it perceives in the intellectivelight of inexpressible wisdom the beauty of Him who truly is. Reverentially entering ever more deeply intointellective contemplation of that beauty, it savors, in loving awe, the fruits of immortality - the visionaryintellections of the Divine. Never withdrawing from these back into itself, it is able to express perfectly theirmagnificence and glory. Activated, as it were, in a strange way by the Spirit, it experiences this admirable passion inunspeakable joy and silence; yet how it is activated, or what it is that impels it, and is seen by it, and secretlycommunicates to it unutterable mysteries, it cannot

explain.

54. If you sow tears of compunction in yourself for the sake of righteousness you will gather a harvest of life -inexpressible joy (cf. Ps.

126:5) If you search out the Lord and patiently wait for Him until the firstlings of His righteousness grow in you,you will reap a rich crop of divine knowledge. The light of wisdom will illuminate you and you will become a lampof eternal light illuminating all men. You will not be grudging towards yourself or your fellow beings, hiding underthe cloak of envy the light of wisdom given to you (cf Matt. 5:15): but in the assembly of the faithful you will uttergood words for the edification of many, explaining things hidden since the beginning of the world - all that you haveheard from above, prompted by the divine Spirit, all that you have come to understand through the contemplation ofthe inner nature of created beings, and all that your fathers have told you (cf. Ps. 78:2-3. LXX).

55. The practice of God's commandments will lead the spiritual contestant to such heights that on the day whenhe becomes perfect in virtue he will be filled with quiet delight and will reign with a pure mind in Zion. Themountains - the spiritual principles of the virtues - will flow with milk, nourishing him as he reposes in the sanctuaryof dispassion, and all the stream-beds of Judah - his faith and spiritual knowledge - will flow with water, withdoctrines, parables and the arcane symbols of things divine. As from the house of God a fountain of ineffablewisdom will flow from his heart and will water the valley of dry reeds - all those, that is to say, who have beenwithered by the aridity and heat of the passions (cf. Joel 3:18. LXX). Then he will experience in himself the truefulfillment of the Lord's words, 'Rivers of living water will flow from the heart of him who believes in Me' (John7:38).

56. For those who fear Me, says God, the Sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. They will goforth from the prison-house of the passions and, loosed from the bonds of sin, they will leap like calves. On the daywhen

God restores them they will tread the wicked and the demons under their feet like ashes; for they will beexalted by all the virtues and because of their wisdom and spiritual knowledge they will be made perfect throughcommunion in the Spirit (cf Mai. 4:2-3).

57. If on the mountain above the plain of this world and within the Church of Christ you raise the standard of newspiritual knowledge and cry aloud, as the prophet says (cf. Isa. 13:2), with the wisdom given to you by God,exhorting and teaching your brethren - opening their mind to the divine Scriptures so that they understand the

wonderful gifts of God, and encouraging them to practice His commandments - do not fear those who envy you thepower of your words and distort every text of divine Scripture; for they are people swept empty and ready to be

occupied by the demons (cf Matt. 12:44). God will write what you say in the book of the living (cf. Rev. 3:5) andno harm will befall you from such men, just as no harm befell Peter from Simon Magus (cf. Acts 8:9-24). On thecontrary, when you see such people trying to put obstacles in your way, you should say with the prophet: 'Behold,my God is my salvation and 1 will trust in Him; 1 will be saved by Him and will not be afraid; for the Lord is myglory and my praise, and He has become my salvation; and I shall not cease proclaiming His glorious deedsthroughout the world'(cf Isa. 12:2,4. LXX).

58. When you perceive that the passions are no longer active within you, and when because of your humility tearsof compunction flow from your eyes, then you must know that the kingdom of God has come upon you and that youhave become pregnant with the Holy Spirit. And when you perceive the Spirit moving and speaking in your heart,inciting you to proclaim in the great congregation the saving power and truth of God (cf. Ps. 40:10), do not keepyour lips sealed for fear of provoking the envy of bigoted men; but as Isaiah counsels (cf. Isa. 30:8), sit and write ona tablet, what the Spirit says to you, so that it may endure in

times to come and for ever. For the envious are arebellious people, lying sons who cannot be trusted (cf. Isa. 30:9). They do not want to be told that the Gospel is stilleffective and makes us friends of God and prophets. On the contrary, they say to the prophets and teachers of theChurch: 'Do not proclaim God's wisdom to us'; and to the visionaries who perceive the spiritual essences of things,they say, 'Do not tell us about that, but speak and proclaim to us another deceit such as the world loves, and free usfrom the prophecy of Israel' (cf. Isa. 30:10). Pay no attention to their malice and their words; for even the deaf willeventually hear your message, divinely inspired as it is for the profit of many, and those blinded by life's opacity andthe fog of sin will see the light of your words. The poor in spirit will exult in them, and those in despair will be filledwith gladness; through your words those spiritually astray will attain understanding, those who revile you will learnobedience to the utterances of the Spirit, and inarticulate tongues will be taught to speak of peace (cf. Isa. 29:18-19,24. LXX).

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59. Blessed is he, says Isaiah, who sows the seeds of his teaching in Zion - that is, in the Church of God - andwho begets spiritual children in the heavenly Jerusalem of the firstborn (cf Isa. 31:9. LXX). For according toScripture such a man may conceal his words for a while, and may himself be hidden as if by flowing water; but inthe end he will be revealed in Zion - in the Church of the faithful - as a glorious river flowing in a land thirsty for thewaters of his wisdom. Then those beguiled by the envious will listen to his words, the heart of those spiritually weakwill give heed, and no longer will the servants of envy enjoin silence when in his devotion he gives good counsel,instead of declaiming the inanities of the wise fools of this world. For his heart has not been occupied with emptythoughts, with ways of doing evil and telling lies in God's sight, thus misleading hungry souls and leaving the soulsof the thirsty unsatisfied (cf. Isa. 32:2-6. LXX). For this reason his words will endure and many will profit fromthem, even though the spiteful and malicious do not believe this to be so.

60. He who dwells in a cave high up on a great rock will be sated with the bread

of spiritual knowledge and made

drunk with the cup of wisdom, and hence his counsel wiU be trustworthy. He wiU see a king arrayed in glory and hewill gaze on a distant land. His soul will meditate on wisdom and he will proclaim to all men the eternal abode thatembraces all and everything.

61. The Lord's teaching is heard by all who fear Him; He gives them an ear with which to hear, and an instructedtongue so that they know when they too must speak (cf. Isa. 50:4-5. LXX). Who but He sets at naught the prudentand the wise of this world and shows their wisdom to be folly, yet confirms the words of His servants (cf Isa. 44:25-26. LXX)? He it is that in His glory does new and astonishing things: He makes a highway of humility andgentleness in the barren and arid heart, and opens rivers of ineffable wisdom in the parched and desiccated mind,giving water to the chosen people that He made His own, so that they may declare His virtues (cf. Isa. 43: 20-21.LXX). He marches at the head of those who love and fear Him, razes the mountains of the passions, shatters thebrazen gates of ignorance, and opens the doors of the knowledge of God, revealing to them its obscure, secret andinvisible treasures, so that they may know that He is the Lord their God, who calls them by their name, 'Israel' (cf.Isa. 45:1-3. LXX).

62. Who is this that strikes terror into the sea of the passions and[V4] 159

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quells its waves? It is the Lord of hosts, who delivers those that love Him from the danger of sin and pacifies theturbulence of their thoughts, who puts His words into their mouth (cf. Jer. 1:9) and protects them under the shadowof His hands - the shadow within which He established the heaven and made firm the earth. He it is who gives tothose who fear Him an instructed tongue (cf. Isa. 50:4) and an understanding ear, so that they may hear His voiceand proclaim His commandments to the house of Jacob, to the Church of the faithful. Those who lack eyes to see therays of the Sun of righteousness, and ears to hear of God's glory, are sunk in the darkness of total ignorance, ofempty hope and vain words. Not one of them speaks justly or judges truly; for they have put their trust in

vanitiesand their words are vacuous. They conceive envy and beget spite and malice (cf. Isa. 59:4. LXX), for their ears areobdurate and deaf. On account of this they revile the word of God's knowledge and refuse to listen to it.

63. What wisdom is there in those filled with pangs of envy against their fellow beings? By what right do themalicious claim, in the words of Jeremiah, that 'we are wise and the law of the Lord is with us' (Jer. 8:8), when theyare consumed with jealousy against those who have received the grace of the Spirit in the form of wisdom anddivine knowledge? But the false knowledge of the scribes and the wise men of this world - of those who have lostthe path of trae knowledge - is altogether valueless. For this reason the worldly-wise, void of the wisdom of theParaclete, founder in confusion: they see the sons of fishermen rich in the wisdom of God and they quail at thepower of their words; but at the same time they are entangled in the nets of their own concepts and reasoning, forthey have rejected true wisdom and truly divine knowledge.

64. Why are these creatures of malice consumed with jealousy against those rich in the grace of the Spirit, against

those blessed with a tongue of fire hke the pen of a ready scribe (of. Ps. 45:1)? Have they not spumed the source ofdivine wisdom? Had they walked in the way of God, they would have dwelt in the peace of dispassion for ever.They would have learnt where they could find sound understanding, strength, clear judgment, spiritual knowledge ofcreated beings, length of days, life, light for the eyes and wisdom yoked with peace. They would have learnt whofinds the dwelling-place of Wisdom and who enters into her storehouses (cf Bar. 3:13-15), and how God issues acommand through the prophet to those initiated into His

teaching, and says, 'Let the prophet to whom things have been revealed in sleep declare his vision, and having heardMy teaching let him proclaim it faithfully' (cf. Jer. 23:28); as He also says, 'Write in a book all the words I havespoken to you' (Jer. 37:2. LXX). Had they themselves chosen this path, they would not be

consumed with jealousyagainst those who do choose it.

65. Yet if the Ethiopian can change his skin or the leopard his spots (cf. Jer. 13:23), these same bantlings ofmalice can also speak and devise what seems good, well versed as they are in evil. With the heel they trip up theirfellow men, their ways being ways of treachery and deception, even with regard to their friends. They lie becauselying and quackery are what they are trained in (cf. Jer. 9:4-5. LXX). So if on account of your intelligence andspiritual knowledge you become a butt for their jealousy and deceit, you must be wary: appeal to God in the wordsof Jeremiah, saying, '0 Lord, remember me and visit me and free me from those who persecute me with their malice.Although it is Thy will to test me for a long time, in Thy forbearance do not reject me. See how those who repudiateThy sacred knowledge have derided me. Consume them in their jealousy, and Thy teaching will be a joy to me andthe delight of my heart. I have not sat in the company of those who spurn Thy knowledge, but have feared thepresence of Thy hand, and sat alone because I was filled with bitterness by their envy.' When you say this you willhear the response:' "This I know well. But if you set him who has gone astray on his right path, 1 will re-establishyou among My friends; you will stand before Me; and if you extract what is precious from what is vile, you will beas My mouth. I will deliver you from these malicious people who plague you", says the Lord God of Israel' (cf. Jer.15:15-21. LXX).

66. Let these malicious sages hear the conclusion of the whole matter (cf. Eccles. 12:13). By their labors wereGod's Nazintes cleansed cleaner than snow; their lives were whiter than milk, their wisdom was more lambent thanthe sapphire (cf. Lam. 4:7. LXX), their words purer than a pearl. Those who delight in worldly knowledge have beenutterly destroyed by the departure of the Spirit. Those nourished on profane wisdom are swathed in the dung ofignorance (cf. Lam. 4:5. LXX): they are shackled in fetters, their tongue is pinioned to their larynx and they aremute. For they have rejected the true wisdom and knowledge of the Holy Spirit, not wanting to attain it throughascetic labor.

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67. God who fells the lofty tree and raises the lowly tree, who desiccates green wood and make dry wood burgeon(cf. Ezek. 17:24), is also the God who opens the mouth of His servants in the midst of a great assembly (cf. Ezek.29:21. LXX), and enables them to proclaim the Gospel with full power (cf. Ps. 68:12. LXX). For wisdom,understanding and strength are His; and just as He changes times and seasons, so He gives to souls that seek Himand desire Him sovereignty over the passions; He converts them from one life to another, bestowing wisdom on thewise in spirit and sound understanding on those endowed with intelligence. He reveals deep hidden things to thosewho explore His depths and initiates them into the meaning concealed in obscure symbolism. For the light ofwisdom and spiritual knowledge dwells in Him and He gives it to whom He wishes (cf. Dan. 2:21-22).

68. If you patiently cany out the commandments in accordance with your outer and your inner self, and look onlyto the glory of God, you will be given the honor of heavenly knowledge, peace of soul and incorruptibility; for youcarry out, and do not simply hear, the law of grace (cf. Jas. 1:25). God will not condemn your knowledge, since youractions will bear witness to it. On the contrary. He will glorify it through the words of knowledge spoken by thosewho by virtue of His wisdom shine as beacons in the Church of the faithful; for God is 'impartial' (Rom. 2:11). If onthe other hand your endeavors are prompted by selfish ambition and you reject the teachings of those inspired by theHoly Spirit, trusting in your own understanding and in the deceptive words of those clad merely in the outwardforms of piety and incited by a vainglorious and hedonistic spirit, then you will be filled with affliction and anguish,with envy, anger and animosity (cf. Rom. 2:8-9). Such will be the immediate reward for your delusion, and such atyour death - when God judges the secrets of men and renders to each according to his actions (cf Rom. 2:6) - will bethe sentence for your mutually self-accusing, self-defending thoughts.

69. 'He is not a real Jew who is one outwardly,' says St Paul, 'nor is true circumcision something external andphysical; he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart, spiritual and not literal'(Rom. 2:28-29). Similarly, you are not perfect in wisdom and spiritual knowledge because you give an outward andvoluble appearance of being so; and you are proficient in virtue, not

because you adopt extreme forms of bodily and outward ascetic practice, but because you dedicate yourself tohidden spiritual work. You are wise and perfect in knowledge when you speak from a pure unsullied heart throughthe Spirit of God, not when you repeat things according to the letter. Then 'you will receive praise not from men but

from God' (Rom. 2:29), since you will be unknown to men or else envied by them, and beloved and known only byGod and those inspired by God's Spirit.

70. If carrying out the law does not make you pure in the sight of God (cf. Gal. 2:16), then neither will asceticstruggle and labor alone perfect you in God's sight. We do indeed receive our grounding in virtue and check theactivity of the passions through ascetic practice; but we are not initiated into the fullness of Christ through thatalone. What, then, brings us to perfection? An ingrained faith in God, the 'faith that makes real the things for whichwe hope' (Heb. 11:1), the faith whereby Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain and was commended asrighteous (cf. Heb. 11:4), and whereby Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out and sojourn in the promisedland (cf. Heb. 11:8). It is such faith that fills those assiduous in the search for truth with great aspiration for theexalted gifts of God, and leads them to the spiritual knowledge of created beings; and it pours into their hearts theinexhaustible treasures of the Spirit, enabling them to bring thence new and old mysteries of God (cf. Matt. 13:52)and to reveal them to the needy. He who is blessed with such faith is initiated by love into the knowledge of God,and has entered into God's rest, having ceased from all his labors as God did from His (cf. Heb. 4:10).

71. If God once swore to non-believers that they would never enter into His rest - and it was on account of theirlack of faith that they could not do so (cf. Heb. 3:18-19) - how can mere bodily discipline, in the absence of faith,enable us to enter the rest of dispassion and the perfection of spiritual knowledge? We do in fact see many whobecause of this are unable to enter and to rest from their labors. We must therefore be wary lest we possess an evil,unbelieving heart (cf.

Heb. 3:12), and because of this are thwarted of rest and perfection, in spite of our great: labors.Otherwise we will be ceaselessly involved in the toils of the ascetic life and will always eat the bread of sorrow (cf.Ps. 127 : 2). If a sabbath rest awaits us - the rest of dispassion and of perfect gnosis - let us through faith strive toenter into it, and not fall

short of it because of our unbelief in the same way as those mentioned in the Bible (cf Heb. 4:9-11).

72. Since we are endowed with senses, intelligence and intellection, we too ought to offer a tithe from ourselvesto God (cf. Heb. 7:2). As beings endowed with senses we ought to perceive sensory things in the right way, throughtheir beauty elevating ourselves to the Creator and referring back to Him our true knowledge of them. As intelligentbeings we ought to speak correctly about divine and human matters. As noetic beings we ought unerringly toapprehend what pertains to God and eternal life, to the kingdom of heaven and the mysteries of the Spirit hiddenwithin it. In this way how we perceive, speak and apprehend will conform to God, and will be genuinely trae anddivine, constituting a sacred offering to God.

75. The tithe that we offer to God is in the tme sense the soul's Passover - its passing beyond, that is to say, everypassion-embroiled state and all mindless sense-perception. In this Passover the Logos is offered up in thecontemplation of the spiritual essences of created beings; He is eaten in the bread of spiritual knowledge; and His

precious blood is drunk in the chalice of ineffable wisdom. Thus he who has fed upon and celebrated this Passovermakes a sacred offering within himself of the Lamb who effaces the world's sin (cf John 1:29); and he will nolonger die but, in the Lord's words, 'will live eternally' (John 6:58).

74. If you have been raised above dead actions you are resurrected with Christ.

And if you are resurrected withChrist through spiritual knowledge, and Christ no longer dies, then you will not be overcome by the death ofignorance. For the death which you have now died to sin, prompted by an impulse in accordance with nature, youhave died once for all; but the life you now live you live in God through the freedom of the Holy Spirit, who hasraised you above the dead actions of sin (cf Rom. 6:9-11). Thus you will no longer live according to the flesh, in afallen worldly state, for you will have died to the mortal members of your body and to worldly matters. On thecontrary, Christ will live in you (cf. Gal. 2:20), for you will be guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit, not enslavedto the law of your outer unregenerate self; and your members will be weapons of righteousness consecrated to GodtheFather(cf Rom. 6:13).

75. He who has freed his members from servitude to the passions, and has consecrated them to the service ofrighteousness

(cf. Rom. 6:19), has risen above the law of his fallen self and has begun to share in the sanctification of the HolySpirit. Sin will no longer dominate him, since he is free in the freedom and the law of the Spirit. Servingrighteousness has an effect altogether different from that of servitude to sin. The latter inevitably leads to thedestruction of the soul's noetic power, while the former leads to the eternal life hidden in Christ Jesus our Lord (cf.Col. 3:3).

76. So long as you live according to your fallen impulses you are dominated by your fallen mortal self. But onceyou die to the world, you are set free from this domination (cf. Rom. 7:2). We cannot die to the world unless we dieto the mortal aspects of ourselves. We die to these when we become participants in the Holy Spirit. We knowourselves to be participants in the Holy Spirit when we offer to God fruits worthy of the Spirit: love for God with allour soul and genuine love for our fellow beings; joy of heart issuing from a clear conscience; peace of soul as aresult of dispassion and humility; generosity in our thoughts, long-suffering in affliction and times of trial, kindnessand restraint in our behavior, deep-rooted unwavering faith in God, gentleness springing from humble-mmdednessand

compunction, and complete control of the senses. When we bear such truits for God, we escape from thedomination of our mortal self; and there is no law condemning and punishing us for the death-purveying fruits weproduced while still living in an unregenerate state. Once we have risen with Christ above dead actions the freedomof the Spirit releases us from the law of our fallen self (cf. Rom. 7:4-6).

77. Those who, having passed through the 'washing of regeneration' (Tit. 3:4), possess the firstfruits of the Spirit,and who preserve them unimpaired, are deeply afflicted by the burden of their fallen self; and they long for their

adoption as sons through the full gift of the Paraclete, so that their body may be freed from servitude to corruption(cf. Rom. 8:23). Indeed, the Spirit helps them in their natural weaknesses and intercedes for them 'with sighs toodeep for words' (Rom. 8:26); for they have conformed their will to God and are filled with the hope of experiencingin their mortal flesh the 'revelation of the sons of God' (Rom. 8:19), the life-quickening death of Jesus (cf. 2 Cor.4:10). In this way they too will be called sons of God, for they will be guided by the Holy Spirit, will be freed fromservitude to the fallen self, and will attain 'the glorious liberty of the children of God' (Rom. 8:21), for

whom, since they love God, 'all things work together for their good' (Rom. 8:28).

78. Divine Scripture is to be interpreted spiritually and the treasures it contains are revealed only through theHoly Spirit to the spiritual. Hence the unspiritual man cannot receive the revelation of these treasures (cf 1 Cor.2:14). The ceaseless flow of his own thoughts makes it impossible for him to understand or listen to anything said bysomeone else. For he lacks the Spirit of God, that searches the depths of God (cf. 1 Cor. 2:10) and knows the thingsof God. He possesses only the material spirit of the world, full of jealousy and envy, of strife and discord; and forthis reason he thinks it foolish to enquire into the sense and meaning of the written word. Unable to understand thateverything in divine

Scripture concerning things divine and human is to be interpreted spiritually, he mocks thosewho do interpret it in this way. Calling such people not 'spiritual', or 'guided by the Spirit', but 'anagogical', he twistsand distorts their words and their divine intellections as much as he can, like the notorious Demas (cf. 2 Tim. 4:10).The spiritual man does not behave in this manner; on the contrary, inspired by the Holy Spirit, he discerns all things,but he himself cannot be called to account by anyone. For he has the intellect of Christ, and that no one can teach(cf 1 Cor. 2:15-16).

79. Since the day of judgment will be one of fire, what each of us has done, as St Paul says, will be tested by fire(cf. 1 Cor. 3:13). Thus, if what we have built up is of an incorruptible nature, it will not be destroyed by fire; and notonly will it not be consumed, but it will be made radiant, totally purified of whatever small amount of filth mayadhere to it. But if the work with which we have burdened ourselves consists of corruptible matter, it will beconsumed and burnt up and we will be left destitute in the midst of the fire (cf 1 Cor. 3:13-15). Incorruptible andimperishable actions are the following: tears of repentance, acts of charity, compassion, prayer, humility, faith, hope,love and whatever else is done in a spirit of devotion. Even while we are still alive such actions help to build us upinto a holy temple of God (cf. Eph. 2:21-22), while when we die they accompany us and remain incorruptibly withus for ever. The actions which are consumed by the fire are well known to all: self-indulgence, vainglory, avarice,hatred, envy, theft, drunkenness, abusiveness, censoriousness, and anything else of a base nature to which ourappetites or mcensive

power prompts us to give bodily expression. Such actions pollute us even while we are still living and consumed bythe fire of desire; and when we are wrenched away from the body, they accompany us but do not survive. On thecontrary, they are destroyed and leave their perpetrator in the midst of the fire, to be punished immortally for alleternity.

80. If through humility and prayer you have been initiated into the spiritual

knowledge of God, this means thatyou are known by God and enriched by Him with an authentic knowledge of His supernatural mysteries. If you aretainted with conceit, you have not been so initiated, but are governed by the spirit of this material world. Thus, evenif you imagine that you know something, in fact you know nothing about things divine in the way you ought to (cf 1Cor. 8:2). If, however, you love God and regard nothing as more precious than love for God and for your fellowbeing, you will also know the depths of God and the mysteries of His kingdom in the way that someone inspired bythe Holy Spirit must know them. And you are known by God (cf. 1 Cor. 8:3), for you are a true worker in theparadise of His Church, out of love doing God's will - that is to say, converting others, making the unworthy worthythrough the understanding given you by the Holy Spirit, and keeping your actions inviolate through humility andcompunction.

81. All of us were baptized into Christ through water and the Holy Spirit, and we all eat the same spiritual foodand drink the same spiritual drink; yet, though this food and drink are Christ Himself, God finds no delight in mostof us (cf. 1 Cor. 10:4-5). For many of those faithful and diligent in ascetic practice and bodily discipline havemortified and emaciated their bodies; but because they lacked the compunction that comes from a contrite andvirtuous state of mind, and the compassion that springs from love for their fellow beings as well as for themselves,they have remained bereft of the fullness of the Holy Spirit, remote from the spiritual knowledge of God. Theirmind's womb is sterile and their intelligence without salt or illumination.

82. What the Logos seeks from the Nazintes is not simply to ascend Mount Sinai through ascetic practice or to bepurified before ascending and to wash their clothes and to abstain from intercourse with a woman (cf. Exod. 19:14-15). It is also to see, not the rearward parts of God (cf. Exod. 33:23), but God Himself in His glory rejoicing in them,bestowing on them the tables of spiritual

knowledge, and sending them out to instiTict His people (cf. Exod. 32:15).

83. The Logos does not take all His servants and disciples with Him when He reveals His hidden and greatermysteries; He takes only those to whom an ear has been given and whose eye has been opened and in whom a newtongue has been trained to speak clearly. Taking such people with Him and separating them from the others - eventhough the latter are likewise His disciples - He ascends Mount Tabor, the mountain of contemplation, and istransfigured before them (cf. Matt. 17:2). He does not yet initiate them into the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven,but shows them the glory and resplendence of the Divinity. And through the light that He gives He makes their lifeand intelligence shine like the sun in the midst of the Church of the faithful. He transforms their intellections into thewhiteness and purity of the brightest light, and puts in them His own intellect, and sends them out to proclaim thingsnew and old (cf. Matt. 13:52) for the edification of His Church.

84. Many have cultivated their own fields with great diligence and have sown pure seed in them, cutting away thethorn-bushes and burning the thistles on the fire of repentance; but because God did not water these fields with thecompunction-bom rain of the Holy Spirit, they did not yield anything. Parched as they were they did not bring forththe rich grain of the knowledge of God. Thus even if they did not perish through a total dearth of the divine Logos,they certainly died poor in the knowledge of God and with hands empty, having provided themselves with but scantnourishment for the divine banquet.

85. When someone says something that edifies his fellow beings, he speaks out of the goodness stored up in hisheart, since he himself is good, as the Lord confirms (cf. Luke 6:45). No one can devote himself to theology andspeak about what pertains to God unless so empowered by the Holy Spirit; and no one when inspired by the Spirit ofGod says anything contrary to faith in Christ (cf. ICor. 12:3). But he says only what is edifying, only what leadsothers to God and His kingdom and restores them to their original nobility, bringing them to salvation and unitingthem to God. And if 'the manifestation of the Spirit is given to each to the degree that is profitable' (1 Cor. 12:7), thismeans that anyone enriched with the wisdom of God and blessed with spiritual knowledge is inspired by the divineSpirit and is a storehouse of the inexhaustible treasures of God.

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86. No one baptized into Christ and believing in Him is left without a share in the grace of the Spirit, so long ashe has not succumbed to any diabolic influence and defiled his faith with evil actions, or does not live slothfuUy anddissolutely. Provided he has preserved unextmguished the firstfruits of the Holy Spirit, which he received from holybaptism, or, if he has extinguished them, has rekindled them through acts of righteousness, he cannot but receivefrom God the fullness of this grace. He may after worthily engaging in spiritual combat be blessed through theplenitude of the Spirit with the consciousness of God's wisdom and so become a teacher in the Church; or he maythrough the same Spirit be given knowledge of God's mysteries and so come to understand the mysteries of thekingdom of heaven; or from the same Spirit he may acquire deep-rooted faith in God's promises, as Abraham did(cf Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3). He may receive the gift of healing, so that he can cure diseases; or of spiritual power, sothat he can expel demons and perform miracles; or of prophecy, so that he can foresee and predict things of the

future; or of the ability to distinguish between spirits, so that he can discern who is speaking in the Spirit of God andwho is not; or of the interpretation of various tongues, or of helping the weary, or of governing God's flocks and Hispeople, or of love for all men and the gifts of grace that go with it, long-suffering, kindness and the rest (cf. 1 Cor.12:8-10, 28). If you are bereft of all these qualities, there is no way in which I can call you a believer or number youamong those who have 'clothed themselves in Christ' through divine baptism (cf. Gal. 3:27).

87. If you possess love, you feel no jealousy or envy. You are not boastful, carried away by reckless pride. Nor doyou put on airs with anyone. Nor do you act shamefully towards your fellow beings. You seek, not simply what is toyour own advantage, but what also benefits your fellow beings. You are not quickly provoked by those who areangry with you. You are not resentful if wrong is done to you, nor do you rejoice if your friends act unjustly, thoughyou do rejoice with them over the truth of their righteousness. You put up with disagreeable eventualities. Youbelieve all things in simplicity and innocence, and hope to receive everything promised to us by God. You patientlyendure all trials, never rendering evil for evil. And, laborer of love that you are, you never waver in your love foryour fellow beings (cf. 1 Cor. 13:4-8).

88. Of those granted the grace of the Holy Spirit in the form of various gifts, some are still immature andimperfect with regard to

these gifts, while others are mature and perfect, enjoying them in their fullness. The first, by increasing their effortsto practice the divine commandments, augment the spiritual gifts they have received so that they are filled with yetgreater gifts, leaving those of immaturity behind. The mature and the perfect, having attained the summit of God'slove and knowledge, cease from exercising partial gifts, whether of prophecy, or of distinguishing between spirits,or of helping, or of governing, and so on (cf 1 Cor. 12:28). Once you have entered the palace of love you no longerknow in part the God who is love (cf. 1 Cor. 13:9) but, conversing with Him face to face, you understand Him fullyeven as you yourself are fully understood by Him (cf. 1 Cor. 13:12).

89. If in your aspiration for spiritual gifts you have pursued and laid hold of love, you cannot content yourselfwith praying and reading solely for your own edification. If when you pray and psalmodize you speak to God inprivate you edify yourself, as St Paul says. But once you have laid hold of love you feel impelled to prophesy for theedification of God's Church (cf. 1 Cor. 14:2-4), that is, to teach your fellow men how to practice the commandmentsof God and how they must endeavor to conform to God's will. For of what benefit can it be to others if, whilecharged with their guidance, you always converse with yourself and God alone through prayer and psalmody, and donot also speak to those in your charge, whether through the revelation of the Holy Spirit, or out of knowledge of themysteries of God, or by exercising the prophetic gift of foresight, or by teaching the wisdom of God (cf 1 Cor.14:6)? For which of your disciples will prepare for battle against the passions and the demons (cf. 1 Cor. 14:8) if hedoes not receive clear instructions from you either in writing or by word of mouth? Truly, if it is not in order to edifyhis flock that the shepherd seeks to be richly endowed with the grace of teaching and the knowledge of the Spirit, he

lacks fervor in his quest for God's gifts. By merely praying and psalmodizing inwardly with your tongue - that is, bypraying in the soul - you edify yourself, but your intellect is unproductive (cf. 1 Cor. 14:14), for you do not prophesywith the language of sacred teaching or edify God's Church. If Paul, who of all men was the most closely unitedwith God through prayer, would have rather spoken from his fertile intellect five words in church for the instructionof others than ten thousand words of psalmody in private (cf. 1 Cor. 14:19), surely those who have responsibility forothers

have strayed from the path of love if they limit the shepherd's ministry solely to psalmody and reading.

90. He who has given us being by miraculously uniting and sustaining the two contrary aspects of our nature,material substratum and spiritual essence, has also given us the capacity for well-being, which we can realize bymeans of His wisdom and spiritual knowledge. Thus through spiritual knowledge we may perceive the hiddentreasures of the kingdom of heaven that He discloses to us, and through wisdom we may make known to our fellow-men the riches of His supernal goodness and the blessings of eternal life which He has prepared for the joy of thosewho love Him (cf. 1 Cor. 2:9).

91. He who has risen above the threats and promises of the three laws and has entered into the life which is notsubject to law has himself become the law of the Church and is not ruled by law. The life that is free is not subject tolaw, and therefore transcends all physical necessity and change. He who has attained such a life is as if liberatedfrom his fallen unregenerate self, and through his participation in the Spirit he becomes incandescent. Purged of allwithin him that is imperfect (cf. 1 Cor. 13:9-10), he is united wholly with Christ, who transcends all nature.

92. If you embrace the knowledge of the primordial Intellect, who is the origin and consummation of all things,infinite in Himself, and existing both within all

things and outside them, then you will know how to live as a solitaryeither by yourself or with other solitaries. For you will suffer no loss of perfection through being on your own, andno loss of solitude through being with others. On the contrary, you will be the same everywhere and alone amongall. You will initiate in others their movement towards a life of solitude and will embody the highest perfection ofvirtue that they set before themselves.

93. The unconfused union and conjunction of soul and body constitutes, when maintained in harmony, a singlereality, whether on the visible level or in their inner being. When not harmonious, there is civil war in which eachside desires victory. But when the intelligence takes control, it at once puts an end to the jealousy and establishesconcord, conforming the entire soul-body reality to its inner being and the Spirit.

94. Of the three main aspects of our being, the first rules the others and is not ruled by them, the second both rulesand is ruled, the third does not rule but is ruled. Thus when the ruling aspect falls under the

domination of either of those aspects which are ruled, that which is by nature free becomes the servant of what areby nature servants; it loses its rightful pre-eminence and nature, and this provokes great discord among the threeleading powers of the soul. So long as there is this discord among them, all things are not yet made subject to thedivine Logos (cf. Heb. 2:8). But when the ruling aspect governs the others and brings them under its own directionand control, then the discordant elements, united into one and becoming concordant, are led peacefully to God. Andwhen all is subjected to the Logos, He delivers the kingdom to God the Father (cf 1 Cor. 15: 24).

95. When the five senses are subject to the four principal virtues and maintain their obedience, they enable thebody, composed of the four elements, tranquilly to fulfill the round of life. When the body is thus disposed, thesoul's powers are not in a state of discord; the passible aspect of the appetitive and mcensive

powers is united withthe power of the intelligence, and the intellect assumes its natural sovereignty. It makes the four principal virtues itschariot and the five subservient senses its seat. And once it has subdued the imperious and unregenerate self, theintellect is seized and borne heavenward in its four-horsed chariot and, led before the King of the ages, is crownedwith the crow n of victory and rests from its long endeavor.

96. For those who with the support of the Spirit have entered the fullness of contemplation, a chalice of wine ismade ready, and bread from a royal banquet is set before them. A throne is prepared for their repose and silver fortheir wealth. Close at hand is a treasure-house of pearls and precious stones, and untold riches are bestowed uponthem. Because of the promptness with which they act, their ascetic life renders them visionary and prepares them tobe brought into the presence, not of sluggards, but of the King.

97. Is the kingdom of heaven already given in this life to all those advanced on the spiritual way, or is it given tothem after the dissolution of the body? If in this life, our victory is unassailable, our joy inexpressible, and our pathto paradise unimpeded: we are directly present in the divine East (cf. Gen. 2:8). But if it is given only after death anddissolution, we should ask that our departure from this life may take place without fear; we should learn what thekingdom of heaven is, what the kingdom of God is, and what paradise is, and how the one differs from the other;also what the nature of time is in each of them, and whether we enter all three, and how and when and after

how much time. If you enter the first while you are still alive and in the flesh you will not fail to enter the other two.

98. The world above is as yet incomplete, and awaits its fulfillment from the first-bom of Israel - from those whosee God; for it receives its completion from those who attain the knowledge of God. Once it is complete, and hasbrought to an end the lower world of believers and unbelievers, it constitutes a single

congregation, allocating toeach member his appointed place, and separating out what cannot be reconciled. It draws to itself the origins andends of all other worlds and, itself unlimited, it sets bounds to them. It is not affected or limited by any otherprinciple, as something that is under constraint. For it is ever-active, in such a way that it is never self-confined orextended beyond its own limits. It is the sabbath rest of other worlds and of every other principle and activity.

99. The nine heavenly powers sing hymns of praise that have a threefold structure, as they stand in threefold rankbefore the Trinity, in awe celebrating their liturgy and glorifying God. Those who come first - immediately belowHim who is the Source and Cause of all things and from whom they take their origin - are the initiators of the hymnsand are named thrones. Cherubim and Seraphim. They are characterized by a fiery wisdom and a knowledge ofheavenly things, and their supreme accomplishment is the godly hymn of El, as the Divinity is called in Hebrew.Those in the middle rank, encircling God between the first triad and the last, are the authorities, dominions andpowers. They are characterized by their ordering of great events, their performance of wondrous deeds and workingof miracles, and their supreme accomplishment is the Trisagion: Holy, Holy, Holy (cf Isa. 6:3; Rev. 4:8). Thosenearest to us, superior to us but below the more exalted ranks, are the principalities, archangels and angels. They arecharacterized by their ministrative function, and their supreme accomplishment is the sacred hymn Alleluia (cf. Rev.19:1). When our intelligence is perfected through the practice of the virtues and is elevated through the knowledgeand wisdom of the Spirit and by the divine fire, it is assimilated to these heavenly powers through the gifts of God,as by virtue of its purity it draws towards itself the particular characteristic of each of them. We are assimilated tothe third rank through the ministration and performance of God's commandments.

We are assimilated to the second rank through our compassion and solidarity with our fellow-men, as well asthrough our ordering of matters great and divine,

and through the activities of the Spirit. We are assimilated to thefirst rank through the fiery wisdom of the Logos and through knowledge of divine and human affairs. Perfected inthis way, and rewarded with the gifts that belong by nature to the heavenly powers, our intelligence is unitedthrough them with the God of the Decad, for it offers to Him from its own being the finest of all the offerings thatcan be made by the tenth rank.

100. God is both Monad and Triad; He begins with the Monad and, as Decad, He completes Himself through acyclic movement. Thus

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He contains within Himself the origins and ends of all things. He is outside everything, since He transcends allthings. To be within Him you must embrace the inner essences and possess a spiritual knowledge of created beings.Then while standing outside all things you will dwell within all things and know their origins and ends; for you willhave attained a spiritual union with the Father through the Logos and will have been perfected in the Spirit. May thesovereignty of this all-perfect, indivisible and coessential Trinity, worshipped in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, andglorified in one nature, kingdom and power of Divinity, prevail throughout the ages. Amen.

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Theoliptos, Metropolitan of Philadelphia

(c. 1250-1322)(Volume 4, pp. 175-191)

Introductory Note

In the past the full significance of Theoliptos in the development of fourfeenth-century Orthodox theology hasbeen underestimated, largely because most of his writings remain still unpublished.^ The texts included in ThePhilokalia represent no more than a small part of his total output. Bom at Nicaea around 1250,

Theoliptos was atfirst married, but at an early age he separated from his wife and became a monk. He suffered imprisonmentbecause of his firm opposition to the union between the Orfhodox Church and the Church Of Rome, promulgatedat the Council of Lyons (1274) and upheld by the Emperor Michael Vlll Palaiologos. Following Michael's death,Theoliptos was elevated to the see of Philadelphia in 1284, and held the position of metropolitan there for nearlyforfy years. He led the heroic defence of the city against Turkish attack in 1310, and died in 1322. He was widelyrespected as a spiritual father, and his work in this sphere is known to us above all through his letters of directionto the nun Irene-Evlogia Choumnaina, abbess of the double monastery of Christ Philanthropos Sotir inConstantinople. St Gregory Palamas, who in his early years was a disciple of Theoliptos, in the Triads singles himout for mention as one of the leading teachers of hesychasm who lived 'in our

' For a good survey ofTheoliptos' life and writings, with full references to the earlier studies by S. Salaville and V. Laurent, see Marie-HeleneCongourdeau, in Dictionnaire de Spiritualite xv (1990), cols 446-59. On his spirituality, see Antonio Rigo. 'Nota sulla dottrina ascetico-spirituale di Teolepto Metropolita di Filadelfia (1250/51-1322)', Rmsto di Stiidi Bizantini e Neoellemci, n.s. xxiv (1987), pp. 165-200. InEnglish, consult Demetrios J. Constantelos, 'Mysticism and Social Involvement in the Later Byzantine Church: Theoleptos of Philadelphia - aCase Study', Byzantine StudieslEtudes Byzantines vi (1979), pp. 83-94; Robert E. Sinkewicz, 'Church and Society in Asia Minor in the lateThirteenth Centuiy: the Case of Theoleptos of Philadelphia', in M. Gervers and R.J. Bikhazi (eds). Conversion and Continuity: IndigenousChristian Communities in Islamic Lands, Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries (Toronto, 1989). Critical editions of Theoliptos' works are beingprepared by R.E. Sinkewicz and Angela Hero.

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own day', and describes him as 'an authentic theologian and a trustworthy visionary of the truth of God'smysteries'.'

The main text included here. On Inner Work in Christ and the Monastic

Profession, was addressed by Theoliptosto Irene-Evlogia, but in the manuscript used by St Makarios and St Nikodimos all the expressions originally in thefeminine have been changed to the masculine. In our translation we have taken account of alternative readingssupplied by Fr Severien Salaville." On Inner Work in Christ is a brief but comprehensive survey of the monasticvocation, offering practical advice on the outward ordering of daily life - on behaviour in church and the refectory,on conversations within the community and with outside persons, on psalmody, spiritual reading, work and sleep -but dealing above all with inner prayer. Theoliptos draws a close parallel between monastic life and the sacramentof baptism.^ He is apophatic in his approach, emphasizing the need to lay aside 'all representational images',thereby attaining 'an ignorance surpassing all knowledge'." He refers several times to the invocation of the name ofJesus, and briefly mentions illumination by the divine light.^^ Here, drawing on earlier tradition, he anticipates thethemes taken up by Palamas later in the fourteenth century.

' Triads 1, ii, 12: see below, p. 341.

^ Formes ou methodes de priere d'apres un byzantin du 14° siecle, Theolepte de Philadelphie', Echos d'Orient xxxix (1940), pp. 1-25.

'Seep. 178.

*Seep. 181.

'See pp. 182, 184, 189.

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On Inner Work in ChristAnd the Monastic Profession

The monastic profession is a lofty and fruitful tree whose root is detachment

from all corporeal things, whosebranches are freedom from passionate craving and total alienation from what you have renounced, and whose fruit isthe acquisition of virtue, a deifying love, and the uninterrupted joy mat results from these two things; for, as St Paulsays, the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace and the other things he mentions (cf Gal. 5:22).

Flight from the world is rewarded by refuge in Christ. By 'world I mean here attachment to sensory things and toworldly proclivities. If you detach yourself from such things through knowledge of the truth you are assimilated toChrist, acquiring a love for Him that allows you to put aside all worldly matters and to purchase the precious pearl,that is to say, Christ Himself (cf Matt 13:46).

You put on Christ through the baptism of salvation (cf. Gal. 3:27), being thus washed clean, illumined withspiritual grace and restored to your original nobility. But what happened then as a result of your weakness of will?Through over-attachment to the world you subverted your likeness to God, through coddling the flesh you renderedthe divine image within you powerless, and with passion-embroiled thoughts you beclouded your soul's mirror so

that Christ, the spiritual Sun, can no longer manifest Himself in it.

Now, however, you have transfixed your soul with the fear of God. You have recognized the world's benightedabnormity and the mental dissipation and vain distraction which it generates, and you have been wounded by alonging for stillness. Obedient to the precepts 'Seek peace and pursue it' (Ps. 34:14) and "Return to your rest, O mysoul' (Ps. 116:7), you have sought to bring peace to your thoughts. You have therefore resolved to regain the nobilitythat you received

through grace at baptism, but jettisoned by your own free choice through your self-indulgence in the world; andaccordingly you have entered this sacred school and set to work, donning the venerable habit of repentance andvowing courageously to remain in the monastery until death.

This is now the second covenant you have made with God. The first you made when you originally entered intothis life; the second, as you swiftly approach its dose. Then through the profession of the trae faith you werenumbered among Christ's flock; now you are united to Him through repentance. Then you found grace; now youhave contracted an obligation. Then, still a little child, you were not aware of the honor conferred on you, althoughlater, as you grew up, you began to appreciate the greatness of the gift and restrained your tongue accordingly. Now,having reached complete understanding, you fully recognize the significance of the vow you are taking. Beware lestyou fail to fulfill this promise as well, and are cast, like some shattered pot, into the outer darkness where there isweeping and gnashing of teeth (cf. Matt. 8:12). No path other than that of repentance leads to salvation.

Listen to what David promises you: 'You have made the Most High your refuge' (Ps. 91:9) and, if on the model ofChrist you choose a life of tribulation, 'no plague will come near you' (Ps. 91:10) - no evil, that is to say, will beinflicted on you because of your worldly life. Now that you have chosen to repent, you will not be shadowed byavidity, self-indulgence, self-glorification, self-display or sensual dissipation. Distraction of the mind, captivity ofthe intellect, the levity of successive thoughts, and every other kind of deliberate prevarication and confusion - fromall such aberrations you will be set free. Nor will you be constrained by the love of parents, brothers and sisters,relatives, friends and acquaintances, and you will not waste time in pointless meetings and talks with them

If you thus give yourself soul and body to the religious life, no scourge of anguish will afflict you (cf. Ps. 91:10),nor will distress pierce your heart or darken your countenance. Distress is muted in those who have renounced thelife of pleasure and are free from attachment to the things that 1 have mentioned, for Christ reveals Himself to thestriving soul and bestows ineffable joy on the heart. No worldly delight or suffering can take away this spiritual joy,for holy meditation, the mindfulness of God that brings salvation, divine

thoughts and words of wisdom nourish and protect everyone engaged m spiritual warfare. That is why such aperson treads upon aU mindless desire and headstrong anger as upon an asp or basilisk, quelling pleasure as thoughit were a snake and wrath as though it were a lion (cf Ps. 91:13. LXX). This is because he has transferred all hishope from men and from worldly things to God, has been enriched with divine knowledge and always callsspiritually upon God to come to his aid. As the Psalmist writes, 'Because he has set his hope on Me, I will deliverhim; I will protect him, because he has known My name. He shall call upon Me, and I will answer him: not only willI deliver him from those who afflict him, but I will also glorify him' (cf. Ps. 91:15-16).

Do you see the struggles of those who lead a godly ascetic life, and the rewards granted them? Then put yourcalling into action without more ado. Just as you have secluded yourself bodily, rejecting worldly things, so likewiseseclude yourself in soul by subjecting also the thoughts of all such things. You have changed your outward clothing;make your monastic profession into a reality. You have separated yourself from crowds of strangers; distanceyourself also from the few who are related to you by birth. If you do not put an end to delusions prompted byexternal things, you will not overcome those that ambush you from within. If you do not triumph over those whofight against you with visible means, you will not repulse your invisible enemies. But when you have quelled bothexternal and inner distraction, your intellect will rise to spiritual labor and spiritual discourse. In the place ofconventional dealings with relatives and friends you will follow the ways of virtue; and instead of filling your soulwith vain words bom of worldly contacts, you will illumine and fill it with understanding through meditating uponthe meaning of Holy Scripture.

To give free rein to the senses is to shackle the soul, to shackle the senses is to liberate it. When the sun sets, nightcomes; when Christ leaves the soul, the darkness of the passions envelops it and incorporeal predators tear itasunder. When the visible sun rises, animals retreat into their lairs; when Christ rises in the heaven of the prayingmind, worldly preoccupations and proclivities abscond, and the intellect goes forth to its labor - that is, to meditateon the divine - until the evening (cf. Ps. 104:19-23). Not that the intellect limits its fulfillment of the spiritual law toany period of time or performs it according to some measure; on the contrary, it continues to fulfill it

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until it reaches the term of this present life and the soul departs from the body. That is what is meant in thePsalms when it is said, 'How 1 have loved Thy law, 0 Lord; it is my meditation all the day long' (Ps. 119:97) - where'day' means the whole course of one's present life.

Suspend, then, your gossip with the outer world and fight against the thoughts within until you find the abode ofpure prayer and Christ's dwelling-place. Thus you will be illumined and mellowed by His knowledge and Hispresence, enabled to experience tribulation for His sake as joy and to shun worldly pleasure as you would bitterpoison.

Winds rouse the Sea's waves, and until they drop the waves will not subside and the sea will not grow calm.

Similarly, if you are not careful evil spirits will rouse in your soul memories of parents, brothers and sisters,relatives, acquaintances, banquets, celebrations, theatres and various other images of pleasure; and they will inciteyou to seek for happiness in visual, vocal and corporeal things, so that you waste not only the present moment butalso the time that you sit alone in your cell, in bringing to mind what you have seen and spoken about. Preoccupiedin this way with memories of his worldly activities, the monk's life passes profitlessly: he is like a man who retreadshis own footsteps in the snow.

If we continue to nourish the demons, when will we slay them? If we let our mind dwell on actions and thoughtsrelated to meaningless friendships and habits, when will we mortify the will of the flesh? When will we live theChrist-like life to which we have committed ourselves? The foot's imprint in the snow dissolves when the sun shinesor when it begins to rain. Mind-embedded memories of self-indulgence whether in thought or act are effaced whenas the result of prayer and tears of compunction Christ rises in the heart. But when will the monk who does notpractice what he has professed expunge passion-imbued memories from his mind?

Moral virtues pertaining to the body are effectuated when you give up commerce with the world. Holy images andthoughts are imprinted on the soul when you efface memories of previous actions by frequent prayer and ferventcompunction.

Heartfelt contrition and the illumination that comes from constant mmdfulness of God excise evilmemories like a razor.

Copy the wisdom of the bees; when they become aware of an encircling swarm of wasps, they remain inside theirhive and so escape

the attacks with which they are threatened. Wasps signify commerce with the world: avoid such commerce at allcosts, stay in your cell, and there try to re-enter the innermost citadel of the soul, the dwelling-place of Christ, whereyou will truly find the peace, joy and serenity of Christ the spiritual Sun - gifts that He irradiates and with which Herewards the soul that receives Him with faith and devotion.

Sitting in your cell, then, be mindful of God, raising your intellect above all things and prostrating it wordlesslybefore Him, exposing your heart's state to Him, and cleaving to Him in love. For mindfulness of God is thecontemplation of God, who draws to Himself the mtellect's vision and aspiration, and illumines the intellect with Hisown light. When the intellect turns toward God and stills all representational images of created things, it perceives inan imageless way, and through an ignorance surpassing all knowledge its vision is illumined by God'sunapproachable glory. Although not knowing, because what it perceives is beyond all knowledge, nevertheless theintellect does know through the truth of Him who truly is and who alone transcends all being. Nourishing its love onthe wealth of goodness that pours forth from God, and fulfilling thereby its own nature, it is granted blessed andeternal repose.

Such are the characteristics of true mindfulness of God. Prayer is the mind's dialogue with God, in which words ofpetition are uttered with the intellect riveted wholly on God. For when the mind unceasingly repeats the name of theLord and the intellect gives its full attention to the invocation of the divine name, the light of the knowledge of God

overshadows the entire soul hke a luminous cloud.

Concentrated mindfulness of God is followed by love and joy: 'I remembered God, and I rejoiced', writes thePsalmist (Ps. 77:3. LXX). Pure prayer is followed by divine knowledge and compunction; again the Psalmist writes,'On whatever day I call upon Thee, behold, I shall know that Thou art my God' (Ps. 56:9. LXX); and. The offeringacceptable to God is a contrite spirit' (Ps. 51:17). When intellect and mind stand attentive before God in ferventsupplication, compunction of the soul will ensue. When intellect, intelligence and spirit prostrate themselves beforeGod, the first through attentiveness, the second through invocation, and the third through Compunction and love, thewhole of your inner self serves God; for 'You shall love your God with all your heart' (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37).

You should take particular notice of this lest, though you thmk you[V4] 182

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are praying, you wander far from prayer, and accomplish nothing. This is what happens during the chanting ofpsalms when the tongue utters the words of the verses while the intellect is carried away elsewhere and is dispersedamong passion-charged thoughts and other things, with the result that comprehension of the psalms goes by theboard. The same thing also happens where we mind is concerned. Time and again, when the mind repeats the wordsof the prayer the intellect does not keep it company and does not fix its attention on God, to whom our words ofprayer are being addressed; imperceptibly it is turned aside by one thought or another. The mind says the words asusual, but the intellect lapses from the knowledge of God. As a result, the soul is devoid of understanding anddevotion, since the intellect is fragmented by fantasies, distracted by what has enticed it away or by what it hasdeliberately chosen.

When there is no conscious understanding of prayer and when the suppliant does not put himself in the presenceof Him whom he invokes, how can the soul be gladdened? How can a heart find joy when it only pretends to praybut lacks true prayer? "The hearts of those who seek the Lord will rejoice' (cf Ps. 105:3). To seek the Lord is toprostrate yourself with your whole mind and with great fervor before God and to expel every worldly thought withthe knowledge and love of God that spring from pure and unremitting prayer.

In order to clarify the nature of the vision bom in the intellect as a result of the mindfulness of God and the statusof the mind during pure prayer, I shall use the analogy of the bodily eye and tongue. What the pupil is to the eye andutterance is to the tongue, mindfulness is to the intellect and prayer is to the mind. Just as the eye, when it receivesthe visual impression of an object, makes no sound, but acquires knowledge of what is seen through the experienceof sight, so it is with the intellect: when through its mindfulness of God it is lovingly assimilated to Him, cleaving toHim exponentially and in the silence of direct and unalloyed intellection, it is illumined by divine light and receivesa pledge of the radiance in store for it. Or again, as the tongue when it speaks reveals to the hearer the hiddendisposition of the intellect, so the mind, when it repeats frequently and ardently the brief words of the prayer, revealsthe soul's petition to the all-knowing God. Persistence in prayer and unceasing contrition of heart enkindle God'scompassion for man and call down the riches of salvation; for 'God will not despise a broken and a contrite heart'(Ps.51:17).

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Another illustration which may lead you to an understanding of pure prayer is that of the earthly king. When youapproach a king, you stand before him bodily, entreat him orally, and fix your eyes upon him, thus drawing toyourself his royal favor. Act in the same manner, whether in church or in the solitude of your cell. When in God'sname you gather together with the brethren, present yourself bodily to God and offer Him psalms chanted orally;and likewise keep your intellect attentive to the words and to God Himself, aware of who it is that your intellectaddresses and entreats. For when the mind devotes itself to prayer actively and with purity, the heart is grantedinexpressible peace and a joy which cannot be taken away. Again, when you sit alone in your cell, cleave to thismental prayer with watchful intellect and contrite spirit. Then on account of your watchfulness the grace ofcontemplation will descend upon you, knowledge will dwell in you by virtue of your prayer, and wisdom will reposein you because of your compunction, banishing mindless pleasure and replacing it with divine love.

Believe me, 1 tell the tmth. If in all your activity you cleave inseparably to the

mother of blessings, prayer, thenprayer itself will not rest until it has shown you the bridal chamber and has led you within, filling you with ineffableglory and joy. By removing every impediment, prayer smoothes the path of virtue and renders it easy for those whopursue it.

Consider now the effects of mental prayer. Dialogue with God destroys passion-imbued thoughts, while theintellect's concentration on God dispels worldly preoccupations. Compunction of soul repels affection for the flesh,and the prayer bom from ceaseless invocation of the divine name reveals itself as the concordance and union ofintellect, intelligence and soul; for 'where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am in the midst of them'(Matt. 18:20). Thus by recollecting the powers of the soul dispersed by the passions, and by uniting them to oneanother and to itself, prayer assimilates the tripartite soul to the one God in three hypostases.

By first removing the ugliness of sin from the soul through the practice of virtue, and then through sacredknowledge renewing the divine beauty imprinted upon it, prayer presents the soul to God. At once the soulrecognizes its Creator, for 'on whatever day 1 call upon Thee, behold, 1 shall know that Thou art my God' (Ps. 56:9.LXX); and in turn it is known by God, for "the Lord knows those that are His'

(2 Tim. 2:19). It knows God because of the purity of His image within it, for every image leads one back to itsoriginal; and it is known by God because its likeness to God has been restored through the practice of the virtues.Thus it is by means of the virtues that the soul knows God and is known by God.

The person who courts the favor of a king does so in one of three ways. He either entreats his possible benefactorwith words, or stands silently before him, or throws himself at his feet Pure prayer, uniting to itself intellect,intelligence and spirit, invokes the divine name with the intelligence; with the intellect it concentrates its unwaveringattention on God whom it invokes; and with the spirit it manifests compunction, humility, and love. In this way itentreats the unonginate Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - the one God.

Just as variety in food stimulates the appetite, so the varied forms of virtue awaken the activity of the intellect.Thus while you travel the path of the mind, repeat again and again the words of the prayer, hold converse with theLord, cry out ceaselessly, and do not give up, praying frequently and imitating the boldness of the widow whomanaged to prevail upon the inexorable judge (cf Luke 18:1-5). Then you will walk in the path of the Spirit,impervious to sensual desires, the flow of your prayer unbroken by worldly thoughts, and you will become a templeof God, praising Him undistractedly. If you pray in the mind in this way you will be granted the privilege ofattaining mmdfulness of God and will penetrate the innermost sanctuary of the intellect, mystically contemplatingthe Invisible and alone celebrating in solitude God alone in the unity of divine knowledge and in outpourings oflove.

When you see yourself, therefore, growing sluggish in prayer, take up a book and by paying careful attention towhat you read absorb its meaning. Do not read through the words in a cursory fashion, but examine them with depthof understanding and treasure their meaning. Then meditate on what you have read, so that your mind incomprehending it is mellowed and it remains unforgotten. Thus will your ardor for reflection on things divine bekindled, for 'a fire shall be kindled during my meditation' (Ps. 39:3. LXX). just as you have to chew food before youcan savor its taste, so you have to ruminate in your soul on holy texts before they enrich and gladden the mind: asthe Psalmist says, 'How sweet Thy words are in my throat' (Ps. 119:103). Learn by heart the words of the Gospelsand me sayings of

the blessed fathers, and study their lives diligently, so that you may meditate on these things during the night. Inthis way when your mind grows listless in prayer you can refresh it by reading and meditating on sacred texts andrekindle its appetite for prayer.

When chanting psalms, do this in a low voice, with your intellect fully attentive: do not allow any phrase to gouncomprehended. Should anything escape your understanding, begin the verse again, and repeat this as many timesas necessary,

until your intellect grasps what is being said. For the intellect can attend to the chanting andsimultaneously can recollect God. You may learn this from everyday experience: you can meet and speak withsomeone and also focus your eyes on him. Similarly, you can chant psalms and focus on God throughrecollectedness.

Do not neglect prostration. It provides an image of man's fall into sin and expresses the confession of oursinfulness. Getting up, on the other hand, signifies repentance and the promise to lead a life of virtue. Let each

prostration be accompanied by a noetic invocation of Christ, so that by faUing before the Lord in soul and body youmay gain the grace of the God of souls and bodies.

To dispel sleep and indolence while practicing mental prayer you may occupy your hands with some quiet task,for this, too, contributes to the ascetic struggle. All such tasks when accompanied by prayer quicken the intellect,banish listlessness, give youthful vigor to the soul, and render the intellect more prompt and eager to devote itself tomental work.

When the wooden sounding-board is struck, leave your cell, your eyes lowered and your mind anchored inmindfulness of God. When you have entered the church and taken your place in the choir, do not indulge in idle talkwith the monk next to you or let your intellect be distracted by vain droughts. Secure your tongue with the chantingof psalms and your mind with prayer. After the dismissal, go back to your cell and begin the tasks prescribed for youby your rule.

When you enter the refectory, do not look round to see how much food your brethren are eating and so fragmentyour soul with ugly suspicions. Look only at what lies before you; with your mouth eat

your food, with your ears listen to what is being read, and with your soul pray. Nourishing body and spirit in thisway, with your whole being you may truly

praise Him who 'satisfies your desire with blessings' (Ps. 103:5. LXX).Then rise and enter your cell with dignity and silence, and like an industrious bee make virtue your labor of love.When you work with the brethren, let your hands do the work while your lips keep silence, and let your intellect bemindful of God. Should someone be prompted to speak idle words, to restore order rise and make a prostration.

Repulse evil thoughts and do not let than penetrate the heart and settle there; for when passion-imbued thoughtspersist they bring the passions themselves to life and are the death of the intellect. As soon as you sense that they areattacking you, try to destroy them with the arrow of prayer. If they go on importuning you to be let in, confusingyour mind, now withdrawing, now assailing you again, you may be sure that a prevement desire for them on yourpart is giving them strength. Because the soul's free will has been overcome in this way, they now have a lawfulclaim against it, and so they perturb and pester it. Hence you should expose them through confession, for evilthoughts take to flight as soon as they are denounced. Just as darkness recedes when light shines, so the light ofconfession dispels the darkness of impassioned thoughts. The vanity and self-indulgence that provided an openingfor such thoughts are destroyed by the shame felt in confessing them and by the hardship of the penance imposed.Evil thoughts See in confusion when they find the mind already free from passions as a result of continuous, trulycontrite prayer.

When a spiritual athlete tries by means of prayer to cut off the thoughts that agitate him, he is successful for awhile and, wrestling and fighting, controls his mental distraction. But he is not delivered completely, because he isstill attached to the things that cause these disturbing thoughts - to bodily comfort, that is to say, and to worldlyambition. It is for this reason, indeed, that he is reluctant to confess his thoughts. Thus he is not at peace, for hehimself keeps hold of what properly belongs to his enemies. If you retain someone else's goods, will not the rightful

owner claim them back from you? And if you do not surrender what you wrongfully possess, how can you escapefrom your adversary? But when the spiritual athlete, strengthened by mindfulness of God, willingly humiliates andill-treats his mortal self, and confesses his thoughts without shame, the enemy withdraws at

once, and the mind - now free - enjoys ceaseless prayer and unintermpted meditation on things divine.

Reject completely every suspicion about someone else that rises in your heart, because it destroys love and peace.But accept with courage any calamity that comes from without, since it provides an opportunity for exercising thepatience that leads to salvation, the patience that bestows an abiding-place and repose in heaven.

If you pass your days in this manner, you will spend this present-life in good heart, glad in the expectation ofblessedness; and at death you will leave this world with confidence and be translated to the place of repose that theLord has prepared for you, granting you as a reward for your present labors the privilege of reigning with Him inHis kingdom. To Him be all glory, honor and worship, as also to His unorigmate Father, and to His all-holy, blessedand life-quickening Spirit, now, for ever, and through all the ages. Amen.

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Theoliptos, Metropolitan of PhiladelphiaTexts

1. When the intellect turns away from external things and concentrates on what is within, it is restored to itself; itis united, that is to say, to the principle of its own consciousness, and through this principle naturally inherent in itsown substance it devotes itself entirely to prayer. By means of prayer it ascends with all its loving power andaffection to the knowledge of God. Then sensual desire vanishes, every pleasure-inciting sense becomes inert, andthe delectable things of earth cease to have any attraction. For once the soul has put behind it all that pertains and isendemic to the body, it pursues the beauty of Christ, engaging in works of devotion and of mental purity. It singsaloud, 'The virgins that follow Him shall be brought to the King' (cf Ps. 45:14. LXX). With Christ's image everbefore it, it exclaims, 'I have set the Lord always before me, for He is at my right hand' (Ps. 16:8). It cleaves toChrist with love and cries, 'Lord, all my desire is before Thee' (Ps. 38:9). It continually contemplates Christ, utteringthe words, 'My eyes are ever towards the Lord' (Ps. 25:15). Discoursing with Christ in pure prayer it is filled withdelight and joy, in accordance with the Psalmist's words,

'My discourse with Him will be full of delight, I willrejoice in the Lord' (Ps. 104 : 34). For God welcomes the discourse bom of prayer, and when He is lovingly invokedand called to our aid. He bestows inexpressible joy on the beseeching soul. For when the soul brings God to mind inthe discourse of prayer, it is gladdened by the Lord: again as the Psalmist says, 'I remembered God and wasgladdened' (Ps. 77:4. LXX).

2. Spurn the senses and you will quell sensual pleasure. Spurn mental fantasies of delectation and you will quellself-indulgent thoughts. For when the intellect remains free from fantasy and image, not permitting itself to beshaped or stamped either by the taints of sensual pleasure or by thoughts full of desire, then it is in a state of

simplicity; and transcending all sensory and intelligible realities, it concentrates its vision on God. Its sole activityis to invoke the Lord's name in the depth of itself with continuous recollectedness, as a child repeats the name of hisfather: as it is said in the Scriptures, 'I will invoke the name of the Lord before you' (Exod. 33:19). And as Adam,molded by God's hand from dust, became through divine inspiration a living soul, so the intellect molded by thevirtues and repeatedly invoking the Lord with a pure mind and an ardent spirit, is divinely transformed, quickenedand deified through knowing and loving God.

3. If through sincere, continual prayer you stand aloof from desire for earthly things, if you repose not with sleepbut through abandoning concern with everything except God, being steadfastly rooted solely in mindfulness of God,you will establish in yourself, like another helpmate, love for God. For the cry of the prayer that rises from withinyou releases divine love; and divine love awakens the intellect, revealing to it what is hidden. Then the intellect,united with love, gives birth to wisdom, and through wisdom proclaims the esoteric meaning of things. For thedivine Logos, invoked in the cry of the prayer that rises from within you, lays hold of the noetic power of theintellect as though it were Adam's rib and fills it with divine knowledge; and in its place, bringing to perfection yourinner state. He confers the gift of virtue. Next He vivifies light-generating love and brings it to the enrapturedintellect as it sleeps a sleep free from all desire for. anything earthly. Love appears as another helpmate to

theintellect liberated from mindless attachment to sensory things; it is because of this that it awakens the intellect, nowin a state of purity that permits it to embrace the words of wisdom. Then the intellect, gazing on love and filled withdelight, speaks at length to others, disclosing to them the hidden dimensions of virtue and the unseen operations ofdivine knowledge (cf Gen. 2:18, 21-23).

4. Stand aloof from all things sensory, abjuring the law of your unregenerate self, and the spiritual law will beengraved on your mind. As, according to St Paul, the spiritually awakened do not implement the desire of the flesh(cf. Gal. 5:16), so he who stands aloof from the senses and from sensory things - stands aloof, that is to say, from theworld and the flesh - is energized by the Spirit and meditates on the things of the Spirit. One can learn of this fromGod's relationship with Adam prior to the fall.

5. If you struggle to keep the commandments, persisting in the paradise of prayer and cleaving to God throughcontinuous recollection of Him, then God will release you from the self-indulgent proclivities of the flesh, from all

sensory impulsion and from all forms engraved upon your thought; and rendering you dead to the passions and to sinHe will make you a participant in divine life. A sleeping person looks like one dead so far as his bodily activity isconcerned, and yet he is alive thanks to the co-operation of his soul. Similarly if you abide in the Spirit you are deadto the world and the flesh, but you live according to the spontaneity of the Spirit.

6. If you grasp the meaning of what you chant you will acquire knowledge. From such knowledge you will attainunderstanding. From understanding springs the practice of what you know. From practice you will reap abidingspiritual knowledge. Experiential spiritual knowledge gives rise to true contemplation. From true contemplation isbom wisdom, filling the firmament of the mind with refulgent words of grace and elucidating what is hidden to theuninitiated.

7. First the intellect seeks and finds, and then it is united to what it has found. The searching is effectuated bymeans of the intelligence, the union by means of love. The search by means of the intelligence is undertaken for thesake of truth, the union by means of love is consummated for the sake of sanctity.

8. If you transcend the flow of temporal things and detach yourself from desire for what is transient, you will notnotice mundane objects or crave for the delectable things of earth. On the contrary. Supernal visions will bedisclosed to you and you will contemplate celestial beauty and the blessedness of unfading realities. To the personwho hankers after material things and who steeps himself in sensual pleasure, the heavens are dosed, since hisspiritual eyes are shrouded; but he who scorns material things and who repudiates them exalts his intellect andperceives the glory of eternal realities and the luminosity of the saints. Such a person is filled with divine love andbecomes a temple of the Holy Spirit; he aspires to do God's will and is guided by the Spirit of God, being granteddivine sonship, blessed by God and conforming to Him. 'For all who are guided by the Spirit of God are sons ofGod'(Rom. 8:14).

9. For as long as you live do not abandon prayer even for a single day on the excuse of illness. Heed St Paul, whosays, 'When I am weak, then I am strong' (2 Cor. 12:10). If you act in this spirit, your profit

will be greater, and the prayer - grace assisting - will soon make you well. Wherever the Spirit brings solace,illness and listlessness are short-lived.

Nikiphoros the Monk

(13th century)

(Volume 4, pp. 192-206)

Introductory Note

Nikiphoros the Monk, often known as Nikiphoros the Hesychast or the Athonite, lived in the second hah" of thethirteenth century. He was bom in Italy, so St Gregory Palamas tells us,^ and was originally a Roman Catholic. But,rejecting what Palamas terms the 'kakodoxy' of the Latin West, he travelled to the Byzantine Empire, where heembraced the Orthodox faith, becoming a monk on the Holy Mountain of Athos. Here he dwelt in 'quietness andstillness', according

to Palamas - presumably this means that he lived in a small hermitage, not in a fully-organizedcenobium - and eventually he withdrew to the 'most isolated parts' of the mountain. Like Theoliptos ofPhiladelphia, he was fiercely opposed to the unionist policy of Michael VIII,~ and he has himself left an account ofthe imprisonment and exile that he suffered in consequence during 1276-7.^ Probably he died before 1300.

The present work. On Watchfulness and the Guarding of the Heart, is mentioned by Palamas, who writes:'Seeing that many beginners were incapable of controlling the instability of their intellect, even to a limited degree,Nikiphoros proposed a method whereby they could restrain to some extent the wanderings of the fantasy.'"* The'method' in question is closely similar to the psychosomatic technique recommended in The Three Methods ofPrayer, attributed to St Symeon the New Theologian.^ Nikiphoros is sometimes styled the 'inventor' of this bodily'method', but Palamas does not actually assert this. It is more

' See Triads, I, ii, 12 (cf below, p. 341); II, ii, 2-3. Compare Daniel Stiemon, in Dictwnnaire de Spiiitualite xi (1981), cols 198-203; AntonioRigo, 'Niceforo I'Esicasta (XIII sec.): alcune considerazioni sulla vita e sull'opera', in Olivier Raquez (ed.), Amore del Bella: Studi sulla Filocalia(Magnano. 1991), pp. 81-119.

^ See above, p. 175.

'Edited by V. Laurent and J. Darrouzes, Dossier grec de I'union de Lyon (1273-1277) (Archives de I'Orient Chretien 16: Paris, 1976), pp. 486-507; cf. pp. 82-8.

" Triads II, ii, 2.

' See above, pp. 72-3.

probable that the 'method' had long been traditional on the Holy Mountain and elsewhere, handed down orallyfrom teacher to disciple, and that Nikiphoros - along with the author of The Three Methods - did no more thanprovide the first

written descriptions of this technique.

The main theme of the work On Watchfulness is the need to return into oneself, to descend with the intellectinto the depths of the heart, and to seek there the hidden treasure of the inner kingdom. After a short anthology oftexts, underlining the importance of keeping guard over the intellect, Nikiphoros concludes by suggesting thephysical 'method' as a practical way of 'entering the heart' and so achieving this state of spiritual watchfulness. Asin The Three Methods, the psychosomatic technique, so it seems, is to be practiced before actually commencingthe Jesus Prayer. Nikiphoros insists that it is highly desirable to have personal direction from an 'unerring guide',but then recommends the 'method' for those who cannot find such a spiritual director. Most modem Orthodoxwriters adopt a different view, and consider it dangerous to use this technique except under the immediateinstruction of an experienced teacher.

St Gregory Palamas concedes that Nikiphoros has written 'in a simple and unsophisticated manner'.' Statementsabout making the intellect descend into the heart, Palamas insists, are not to be interpreted literally, for our mentalfaculties are not located spatially inside the physical heart 'as in a container'." But there is none the less the genuinecorrelation - what has sometimes been termed a relationship of 'analogy-participation' - between our physicalmodalities and our mental or spiritual state: 'After the fall our inner being naturally adapts itself to outwardforms.'^ Nikiphoros was therefore correct, Palamas concludes, in suggesting specific ways whereby our bodilyenergies can be harnessed to the work of prayer.

' Triads, II, ii, 3.

^ Triads I, ii, 2 (see p. 334).

' Triads I, ii, 8 (see p. 338). For the phrase 'analogy-participation' see J.-A. Cuttat, The Encounter of Religions.- A Dialogue between the Westand the Orient, with an Essay on the Prayer of Jesus (New York/Toumai, 1960), pp. 92-3.

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If you ardently long to attain the wondrous divine illumination of our Savior Jesus Christ; to experience in yourheart the supracelestial fire and to be consciously reconciled with God; to dispossess yourself of worldly things inorder to find and possess the treasure hidden in the field of your heart (cf Matt. 13:44); to enkindle here and nowyour soul's flame and to renounce all that is only here and now; and spiritually to know and experience the kingdomof heaven within you (cf. Luke 17:21): then I will impart to you the science of eternal or heavenly life or, rather, amethod that will lead you, if you apply it, painlessly and without toil to the harbor of dispassion, without the dangerof being deceived or terrified by the demons. Terror of this kind we experience only when through disobedience weestrange ourselves from the life I am about to describe. This was the fate of Adam when he violated God'scommandments: associating with the serpent and trusting him, he was sated by him with the fruits of deceit (cf. Gen.3:1 -6), and thus wretchedly plunged himself and all those who came after him into the pit of death, darkness andcorruption.

You should, then, return; or - to put it more truly - let us return, brethren, to ourselves, rejecting once and for allwith disgust the serpent's counsel and our deflection to what is base. For we cannot be reconciled with God andassimilated to Him unless we first return or, rather, enter into ourselves, in so far as this lies within our power. Forthe miracle consists in tearing ourselves away from the distraction and vain concerns of the world and in this wayrelentlessly seizing hold of the kingdom of heaven within us.

That is why the monastic life has been called the art of arts and the science of sciences. For this holy disciplinedoes not procure us what is corruptible, so that we divert our intellect from higher to lower things

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and completely stifle it. On the contrary it offers us strange, indescribable blessings, that 'the eye has not seen,and the ear has not heard, and man's heart

has not grasped' (1 Cor. 2:9). Henceforward 'we wrestle not against fleshand blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world' (Eph. 6:12). If,then, this present age is one of darkness, let us flee from it. Let us flee from it in our thoughts so that we may havenothing in common with the enemy of God. For if you choose to be a friend of this present age you are an enemy of

God (cf. Jas. 4:4). And who can help an enemy of God?

Let us therefore imitate our fathers and like them let us seek the treasure within our hearts. And when we havefound it let us hold fast to it with all our might, both cultivating and guarding it (cf. Gen. 2:15); for this is what wewere commanded to do from the beginning. And if another Nikodimos should appear and begin to argue, saying,'How can anyone enter into his own heart and work or dwell in it?' - as the original Nikodimos, doubting the Savior,said, 'How can someone who is old enter the second time into his mother's womb and be bom?' (John 3:4) - let himin his turn hear the words, 'The Spirit blows where He wants to' (John 3:8). If we are full of disbelief and doubtabout the practice of the ascetic life, how shall we enjoy the fruits of contemplation? For it is practice that initiatesus into contemplation.

Doubters of this kind cannot be convinced without written evidence. Hence for the benefit of many I will includein this discourse passages from the lives of the saints and from their writings: reading them should dispel all doubt. Iwill begin at the beginning with St Antony the Great, and then continue with his successors, selecting and settingforth their words and actions as best I can, so as to confirm what I have been saying.

From the Life of Our Holy Father Antony

Once two brothers were on their way to visit St Antony, but on the journey their water gave out and one of themdied and the other was near to dying. Unable to go any further, he too lay down on the ground

From the Life of Our Holy Father Antony

and awaited death. But Antony, seated on the mountain, called two monks who happened to be with him and saidto them urgently, 'Take a jar of water and go as fast as you can along the road leading to Egypt: two men were ontheir way here, but one has just died and the other will also die if you don't hurry. This was revealed to me as I waspraying.' The monks set off; and finding the one man dead they buried him, while they revived the other with waterand brought him to the elder. It was about a day's journey off. Should you ask why Antony did not speak before thefirst man died, I would say that the question is inapt: the decision about death rested not with Antony but with God,and He allowed the first man to die and sent a revelation to St Antony about the second. The miracle happened to StAntony, and to him alone, because while seated on the mountain he kept his heart watchful, and so the Lord showedhim what was happening a long way off

Do you see how through watchfulness of heart St Antony was able to perceive God and to acquire the power ofclairvoyance? For it is in the heart that God manifests Himself to the intellect, first - according to St John Klmiakos -as fire that purifies the lover and then as light that illumines the intellect and renders it godlike.

From the Life of St Theodosios the Cenobiarch

St Theodosios was so deeply wounded by the sweet arrow of love, and was held so fast in love's fetters, that hefulfilled in actual practice the exalted commandment, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, andwith all your soul, and with all your mind' (Matt. 22:37). Such a state can be attained only by so concentrating thesoul's natural powers that they aspire to nothing other than the Creator alone. So great were these spiritual energiesin his soul that when exhorting someone he often inspired awe; yet when giving

From the Life of St Theodosios the Cenobiarch

rebukes he was always gentle and tender. Who else could talk with so many people and be of such service tothem, or could so concentrate their senses and turn them inwards that in the midst of tumult they lived with greaterserenity than did those in the desert'? Who else could remain just the same whether among

crowds or dwellingalone? It was by thus concentrating the senses and turning them inwards that the great Theodosios came to bewounded by love for the Creator.

From the Life of St Arsenios

St Arsenios made it a rule never to discuss things in writing and never to send letters. This was not out ofweakness or incapacity - how could it have been, seeing that he could speak eloquently with as much ease as othersdisplayed when speaking in a normal way? But it was due to his long habit of silence and his dislike of self-display.For the same reason he took great care when in church or at any other gathering not to look at other people or to beseen by them; he would stand behind a column or some other obstruction and hide himself from view, remainingunseen and not mixing with others. This holy man and earthly angel acted like this because he too wanted to keep astrict watch on himself and to concentrate his intellect inwardly so that he could raise himself towards God withoutimpediment.

From the Life of St Paul of Mount Latros

Although the divine Paul always lived in the mountains and in desert places, and shared his solitude and his foodwith wild animals, there were nevertheless times when he went down to the Lavra in order to visit the brethren. Hecounseled them, exhorting them not to be fainthearted and not to neglect the assiduous practice of the virtues.

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From the Life of St Paul of Mount Latros

but to persevere with all attentiveness and discrimination in their efforts to live according to the Gospels and intheir courageous fight against the spirits of evil. He also taught them a method by which they could expungeingrained passion-imbued dispositions as well as counteract new seeds of passion.

You see how this holy father teaches his uninitiated disciples a method through which they could ward off theattacks of the passions? This method was none other than the art of keeping watch over the intellect, for it is only bykeeping

such watch that we can ward off the passions.

From the Life of St Savvas

When St Savvas saw that a monk had thoroughly mastered the rules of monastic conduct, and was already able tokeep watch over his intellect and fight off demonic thoughts - had indeed banished from his mind all memory ofworldly things - then, if this monk was physically weak and ill, St Savvas allowed him to have a cell in the Lavra.But if such a monk was vigorous and in good health, he told him to build his own cell.

Do you see how the divine Sawas, too, required his disciples to keep watch over the intellect and only thenpermitted them to dwell by themselves in their own cells? What are we doing who idly sit in our cells without evenknowing whether there is such an art as keeping watch over the intellect?

From the Life of Abba Agathon

One of the brethren asked Abba Agathon which is the better, bodily asceticism or the guarding of our inner state.The elder replied: 'Man is

From the Life of Abba Agathon

like a tree: bodily asceticism is the leaves, the guarding of our inner state the fruit. Since, according to theScriptures, "every tree that fails to produce good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire" (Matt. 3:10), it is clearthat all our efforts should be devoted to producing the fruit, that is, to keeping watch over our intellect. But we alsoneed the shelter and canopy of the leaves - bodily asceticism.'

How astonishing it is that this saint denounced those who fail to learn how to keep watch over the intellect andwho boast only of their bodily asceticism: every tree, he said, which does not produce fruit - by which is meantkeeping watch over the intellect - but only has leaves, that is, bodily asceticism, is cut down and thrown into the fire.How terrible, father, is your verdict.

From Abba Mark's Letter to Nicolas

If, my son, you wish to acquire within yourseh" your own lamp of noetic light and spiritual knowledge, so as towalk without stumbling in the dark night of this age; and if you wish your steps to be ordered by the Lord, delightingin the way of the Gospel - that is, desiring with ardent faith, with zeal and prayer, to practice the commandments ofthe Gospel - then I will show you a wonderful spiritual method to help you achieve this. It does not call for bodilyexertion, but requires spiritual effort, control of the intellect, and an attentive understanding, assisted by fear andlove of God. Through this method you can easily put to flight the cohorts of the enemy. If, then, you wish to triumphover the passions, enter within yourself through prayer and with the help of God. Descend into the depths of theheart, and search out the three powerful giants - forgetfulness, sloth and ignorance - which enable the rest of the evilpassions to infiltrate into the self-indulgent soul, and to live, energize and flourish there. Then through strictattentiveness and control of the intellect, together with help from above, you will track down these evil giants, aboutwhich most people are ignorant; and so you will be able to free yourself from them by means of strict attentivenessand prayer. For when, through the action

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From Abba Mark's Letter to Nicolas

of grace, zeal for true knowledge, for mindfulness of God's words and for genuine concord is diligently plantedand cultivated in the heart, then the last traces of forgetfulness, ignorance and sloth are expunged from it.

Observe how admirably different spiritual teachings concur, and how clearly they explain the meaning of prayer.

From St John Klimakos

A hesychast is one who strives to enshrine what is bodiless within the temple of the body, paradoxical though thismay sound. A hesychast is one who says, T sleep but my heart is watchful' (Song of Songs 5:2). Close the door ofyour cell to the body, the door of your tongue to speech, and your inner gate to evil spirits. Ascend into awatchtower - if you know how to - and observe how and when and

whence, and in what numbers and what form, therobbers try to break in and steal your grapes. When the watchman grows weary he stands up and prays; then he sitsdown again and manfully resumes the same task. Guarding against evil thoughts is one thing, keeping watch overthe intellect is another. The latter differs from the former as much as east from west, and is far more difficult toattain. Where thieves see royal weapons at the ready they do not attack the place lightly. Similarly, spiritual robbersdo not lightly try to plunder the person who has enshrined prayer within his heart.

Do you see how these words reveal the wonderful inner work of this great father? We, on the other hand, walk indarkness and as though in some midnight brawl tread these soul-saving words of the Spirit underfoot, spuming themas though willfully deaf But now in the passages that follow see what the fathers set down for us as guidance in the

attaining of watchfulness.[V4] 201

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From St Isaiah the SoHtary

When a man severs himself from evil, he gains an exact understanding of all the sins he has committed againstGod; for he does not see his sins unless he severs himself from them with a feeling of revulsion. Those who havereached this level pray to God with tears, and are filled with shame when they recall their evil love of the passions.Let us therefore pursue the spiritual way with all our strength, and God in His great mercy will help us. And if wehave not guarded our hearts as our fathers guarded theirs, at least in obedience to God let us do all we can to keepour bodies sinless, trusting that at this time of spiritual dearth He will grant mercy to us together with His saints.

Here then this great father encourages those who are very weak, saying that, even if we have not guarded ourhearts as the fathers have done, let us at least keep our bodies free from sin, as God demands, and He will bemerciful to us. Great is the compassion and sympathy of such a father.

From St Makarios the Great

The most important task for an ascetic is to enter into his heart, to wage war against Satan, to hate him, and tobattle with him by wrestling against the

thoughts he provokes. If you keep your body outwardly chaste and pure, butinwardly are adulterous where God is concerned and profligate in your thoughts, then you gain nothing fromkeeping your body chaste. For it is written, 'Whoever looks at a woman with lust has already committed adulterywith her in his heart' (Matt. 5:28). In other words, you can fornicate through the body, and you also fornicate whenyour soul communes with Satan.

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From St Makarios the Great

This great father seems to contradict the words of St Isaiah quoted above. Yet this is not the case, for St Makariosexhorts us also to guard our body in the way that God requires. But he asks us to keep pure not only our body butour spirit as well. Thus he too enjoins what the Gospel commandments stipulate.

From St Diadochos

He who dwells continually within his own heart is detached from the attractions of this world, for he lives in theSpirit and cannot know the desires of the flesh. Such a man henceforward patrols the fortress of the virtues, postingthem as watchmen at all the gates. The assaults of the demons are now ineffective against him.

Rightly does the saint say that the assaults of the demons are now ineffective - ineffective, that is, when we dwellin the depth of our own hearts, and the more so the longer we dwell there. But I lack time to cite here extracts fromall the fathers, so I will add one or two more and bring this work to a close.

From St Isaac the Syrian

Strive to enter the shrine within you and you will see the shrine of heaven, for the one is the same as the other, anda single entrance permits you to contemplate both. The ladder leading to that kingdom is hidden within you, that is,within your soul: cleanse yourself from sin and there you will find the steps by which to ascend.

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From St John of Karpathos

A great effort and much toil are needed in prayer before we can reach a state in which our mind is no longertroubled, and so attain the inward heaven of the heart where Christ dwells. As St Paul says, 'Do you not realize thatChrist dwells within you, unless you are worthless?' (cf 2 Cor. 13:5).

From St Symeon the New Theologian

After the devil and his demons had brought about man's exile from paradise and from God by making himtransgress, they found they could inwardly derange - to a greater or lesser extent - anyone's reason whenever theywanted to. The only defense against this is the ceaseless mmdfulness of God, for if such mmdfulness is stamped onthe heart through the power of the cross it will render our thought steadfast and unshakeable. This is a state to whichthe spiritual contest of every Christian who enters the arena of Christ's faith should lead, if he is not to struggle invain. For it is to achieve this state that God's athlete embraces all the various forms of ascetic practice. He embracesthem so as to call down God's mercy upon him, that Christ may restore him to his original status and may be set as aseal on his mind. This accords with St Paul's words, 'My little children, for you I again bear the pangs of birth, untilChrist is formed in you' (Gal. 4:19).

Have you grasped, brethren, that there is a spiritual art or method swiftly leading whoever pursues it to dispassionand the vision of God? Are you convinced that every external form of asceticism is regarded by God as the foliage

of a fruitless tree and will be of no benefit to the[V4] 204

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From St Symeon the New Theologian

soul that is not capable of guarding the intellect? Let us then strive not to die fruitless, and thereafter repent to nopurpose.

Question: From what has been said we have learned not only of the practice of those who live in accordance withGod's will but also that there is a certain fonn of action that speedily frees the soul from passions and unites it tolove for God,

and that everyone who engage in spiritual warfare must adopt this form. About these things we haveno doubt and are quite convinced. But we are anxious to know what exactly attentiveness is and how we mayacquire it, for of this we are altogether ignorant.

Response: In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ who said 'Without Me you can do nothing' (John 15:5), havinginvoked His help and assistance, I will do my best to show you what attentiveness is and how, if God wills, it maybe attained.

From Nikiphoros Himself

Some of the saints have called attentiveness the guarding of the intellect others have called it custody of the heart,or watchfulness, or noetic stillness, and others something else. All these expressions indicate one and the same thing,just as 'bread' and 'a round' or 'a slice' do; and you should read them in this sense. As to what attentiveness itself isand what its characteristics are, this you can now learn in more detail.

Attentiveness is the sign of true repentance. It is the soul's restoration, hatred of the world, and return to God. It isrejection of sin and recovery of virtue. It is the unreserved assurance that our sins are forgiven. It is the beginning ofcontemplation or, rather, its presupposition, for through it God, descrying its presence in us reveals Himself to theintellect. It is serenity of intellect or, rather, the repose bestowed on the soul through God's mercy. It is thesubjection of our thoughts, the palace of the mmdfulness of God, the stronghold that enables us patiently to acceptall that befalls. It is the ground of faith, hope and love. For if you do not have faith you cannot endure the outwardafflictions that assail you; and if you do not bear them gladly you cannot say to the Lord, 'Thou art my helper andmy refuge' (Ps 91:2).

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From Nikiphoros Himself

And if the Most High is not your refuge you wiU not lay up His love in your heart.

Most if not all of those who attain this greatest of gifts do so chiefly through being taught. To be sure, a fewwithout being taught receive it directly from God through the ardor of their endeavor and the fervor of their faith;but what is rare does not constitute the norm. That is why we should search for an unerring guide, so that under hisinstruction we may learn how to deal with the shortcomings and exaggerations suggested to us by the devilwhenever we deviate left or right from the axis of attentiveness. Since such a guide will himself have been testedthrough what he has suffered, he will be able to make these things clear to us and will unambiguously disclose thespiritual path to us so that we can follow it easily. If you have no such guide you must diligently search for one. If,however, no guide is to be found, you must renounce worldly attachments, call on God with a contrite spirit andwith tears, and do what I tell you.

You know that what we breathe is air. When we exhale it, it is for the heart's sake, for the heart is the source oflife and warmth for the body. The heart draws towards itself the air inhaled when breathing, so that by dischargingsome of its heat when the air is exhaled it may maintain an even temperature. The cause of this process or, rather, itsagent, are the lungs. The Creator has made these capable of expanding and contracting, like bellows, so that they caneasily draw in and expel their contents. Thus, by taking in coolness and expelling heat through breathing, the heartperforms unobstructed the function for which it was created, that of maintaining life.

Seat yourself, then, concentrate your intellect, and lead it into the respiratory passage through which your breathpasses into your heart. Put pressure on your intellect and compel it to descend with your inhaled breath into yourheart. Once it has entered there, what follows will be neither dismal nor glum. Just as a man, after being far awayfrom home, on his return is overjoyed at being with his wife and children again, so the intellect, once it is unitedwith the soul, is filled with indescribable delight.

Therefore, brother, train your intellect not to leave your heart quickly, for at first it is strongly disinclined toremain constrained and circumscribed in this way. But once it becomes accustomed to remaining there, it can nolonger bear to be outside the heart. For the kingdom of heaven is within us (cf Luke 17:21); and when the

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intellect concentrates its attention in the heart and through pure prayer searches there for the kingdom of heaven,all external things become abominable and hateful to it. If, then, after your first attempts you enter through yourintellect into the abode of the heart in the way that I have explained, give thanks and glory to God, and exult in Him.Continually persevere in this practice and it will teach you what you do not know.

Moreover, when your intellect is firmly established in your heart, it must not remain there silent and idle; it shouldconstantly repeat and meditate on the prayer, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me', and should neverstop doing this. For this prayer protects the intellect from distraction, renders it impregnable to diabolic attacks, and

every day increases its love and desire for God.

If, however, in spite of all your efforts you are not able to enter the realms of the heart in the way I have enjoined,do what I now tell you and with God's help you will find what you seek. You know that everyone's discursivefaculty is centered in his breast; for when our lips are silent we speak and deliberate and formulate prayers, psalmsand other things in our breast. Banish, then, all thoughts from this faculty - and you can do this if you want to - andin their place put the prayer, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me', and compel it to repeat this prayerceaselessly. If you continue to do this for some time, it will assuredly open for you the entrance to your heart in theway we have explained, and as we ourselves know from experience.

Then, along with the attentiveness you have so wished for, the whole choir of the virtues - love, joy, peace and theothers (cf Gal. 5:22) - will come to you. Through the virtues all your petitions will be answered in Christ Jesus ourLord, to whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit be glory, power, honor and worship now and always andthroughout the ages. Amen.

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St Gregory of Sinai

(c. 1265-1346)

(Volume 4, pp. 207-286)

Introductory Note

Orthodox mystical theology in the mid-fourteenth century possesses as its crowning glory the two Gregories: StGregory of Sinai and St Gregory Palamas.^ Although they were on the Holy Mountain of Athos at the same time, itis uncertain how far they were in personal contact.' Gregory of Sinai was bom, probably around 1265 (but the dateis uncertain), near Klazomenai, on the western shores of Asia Minor. Taken prisoner as a young man in a Turkishraid, after being ransomed he went to Cyprus, where he entered the first grade of the monastic life, becoming arasophore. Next he travelled to Sinai, where he received full monastic profession. From here he went to Crete,where - according to his disciple and biographer Patriarch Kallistos I - he learned from a monk called Arseniosabout the 'guarding of the intellect, true watchfulness and pure prayer': in other words, he was initiated into thattradition of inner prayer - including the Jesus Prayer - to which the writings in The Philokalia bear witness.

After this St Gregory moved to Mount Athos, perhaps around the turn of the century, where he remained for thenext twenty-five years. Like Nikiphoros the Monk,^ he chose to live not in one of the large cenobia but in asecluded hermitage, settling in the skete of Magoula, not far from the monastery of Philotheou. Turkish incursionsforced him to leave Athos around 1325-8, although he returned there briefly during the 1330's. He played nodirect part in the hesychast dispute which broke out around 1335, and in which his namesake St Gregory Palamaswas deeply involved; probably it was by deliberate choice that

' On St Gregory of Sinai, see Kallistos Ware, 'The Jesus Prayer in St Gregory of Sinai', Eastern Churches Review 4 : 1 (1972), pp. 3-22; DavidBalfour, Saint Gregory the Sinaite: Discourse on the Transfiguration (offprint from the periodical Theologia: Athens, 1983).

' See David Balfour, 'Was St Gregory Palamas St Gregory the Sinafte's Pupil?', St Vladimir's Theological Quarterly xxviii (1984), pp. 115-30.Balfour answers this question with an emphatic 'yes', but many of his ai'guments remain speculative.

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he avoided controversy and polemics. But there can be no doubt that his own theological standpoint, althoughless explicitly developed, agrees fundamentally with that of Palamas on all essential points. This is confirmed bythe Discourse on the Transfiguration, recently edited by David Balfour, in which the Sinaite clearly speaks of thelight of Tabor as divine and uncreated. The last years of his life were spent in the remote wilderness of Paroria, inthe Strandzha Mountains on the border between the Byzantine Empire and Bulgaria, where he enjoyed thepatronage of John Alexander, Tsar of Bulgaria. Here he gathered round him a large group of disciples, both Greeksand Slavs, and here he died on 27 November 1346."

St Makarios and St Nikodimos have included five works by the Sinaite in The Philokalia. Since their titles varywidely in the manuscripts and they are cited in different ways by modem writers, it will be helpful to list themhere, giving first the titles used in our translation, and then the Latin titles used in Migne:

(I) On Commandments and Doctrines, Warnings and Promises; on Thoughts, Passions and Virtues, and also onStillness and Prayer: One Hundred and Thirty-Seven Texts; Migne: Capita vaide utilia per acrostichidem (P.G. cl,1240-1300). In the Greek original, the initial letters of each text form an acrostic, spelling out the title of the work.The subject matter, as the title indicates, is extremely varied; the work is concerned mainly with ascetic practicerather than inner prayer.

(II) Further Texts; Migne: Alia Capita (P.G. cl, 130a—4). Seven texts, forming a short supplement to (I).

(III) On the Signs of Grace and Delusion, Written for the Confessor Longinos: Ten Texts; Migne: De quiete et

oratione (P.G. cl, 1304-12). In this and the two following works, St Gregory discusses more particularly innerprayer, especially the Jesus Prayer, as well as indicating how to distinguish between experiences that come fromGod and those

emanating from the demons or the fallen self. Nothing is known about the Longinos to whom thisthird treatise is addressed, but he was presumably one of Gregory's monastic colleagues or disciples. Gregory termshim ar]fiEio(p6pog, which means literally

' For the decisive influence of Gregory of Sinai's disciples upon the Slav world, see Dimitri Obolensky, The Byzantine Commonwealth: EasternEurope, 500-1453 (London, 1971), pp. 301-8, 336-43; Anthony-Emil N. Tachiaos, 'Gregory Sinaites' legacy to the Slavs: Preliminary Remarks',Cyrillomethodianum vii (1983), pp. 113-65.

'standard-bearer', 'ensign'; in Christian authors, it can signify a confessor for the faith or a miracle-worker.Perhaps Longinos, like Theoliptos of Philadelphia and Nikiphoros the Monk, suffered for the Orthodox faith underthe unionist Emperor Michael VIII.

(IV) On Stillness: Fifteen Texts; Migne: De quietudine et duobis orationis modis (P.G. cl, 1313-29). This workcontains a lengthy section on psalmody (§§ 5-9). The manuscripts disagree concerning the recipient, who isvariously named 'Joachim the Vigilant', 'Niphon the Hesychast', 'brother Philotheos of the same mountain of Sinai'.It is extremely unlikely that Gregory wrote this work while still at Sinai, before being initiated into inner prayer bythe monk Arsenios; but it is of course possible that, while on Athos or at Paroria, he continued to maintain contactwith monks whom he had met at Sinai. All three of these persons are otherwise unknown to us, but clearly they aremonks.

(V) On Prayer: Seven Texts; Migne: Quomodo oporteat sedere hesychastam ad orationem nee cito assurgere(P.G. cl, 1329-45). This includes a section on food (§ 6). No name of any addressee is mentioned in themanuscripts. The work has a warm and friendly tone and was obviously intended for a real individual, who is said

to be advanced in years (§ 6). Gregory is forthright in his demands, but speaks to the recipient in respectful andencouraging terms. ^

None of these works contains any indication of date or place, and so it is impossible to say at what point in StGregory's career they were composed; but from their tone it seems likely that they were written towards the end ofhis life, either during his last years on Athos or at Paroria. Clearly he had a monastic audience in mind, and waswriting for hesychasts dwelling alone or in hermitages rather than for cenobites in large, fully organizedcommunities.

Patriarch Kallistos, in his Life of St Gregory, emphasizes the Sinaite's austerity in his earlier years and his radiantjoy and loving kindness at the end of his life. Both of these characteristics are evident in the texts that follow. Thedaily programme that Gregory proposes for the

' In our translation of works (I) and (II) we have used the Greek text printed in The Philokalia, which is reproduced without change in Migne.For works (III)-(V) we have been able to consult a preliminary draft of the forthcoming critical edition of Gregory of Sinai, in course ofpreparation by Dr Hans-Veit Beyer of the Kommission fur Byzantinistik attached to the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna. We lookfoiTvai'd eagerly to its eventual publication.

hesychast is daunting in its severity (I, 99, 101),^ and he is strict and uncompromising in his analysis of delusion(I, 131-2, 135; III, 10; V, 7), in his warnings about the coming judgment (I, 34-40), his strictures upon the passions(I, 62-5, 70-9, 110), and his demand for total humility (I, 115, 117). But he speaks also about the 'warmth of heart'which marks 'the beginning of prayer' (IV, 10), and about the exultation, rapture and ecstasy to which, by God'sgrace, the inner pilgrimage of the hesychast eventually leads (I, 58-9, 113, 118; III, 3, 5, 9). True to the apophatictradition of inner prayer, the Sinaite requires a resolute 'shedding' of images and thoughts (I, 118; III, 3; IV, 9; V,7),' yet he allows an important place to feelings - although without any trace of sentimental emotionalism. Althoughhe is deliberately reticent when referring to the transfiguring vision of the divine light (I, 23, 116, 118), and iscareful to warn the reader against the ever- present danger of delusion by false visions of light (III, 3; IV, 10)," it isevident that he stands in the same spiritual tradition as St Symeon the New Theologian and St Gregory Palamas.

In his teaching upon inner prayer, the Sinaite assigns a central place to the invocation of the name of Jesus. Thisis to be practised 'under spiritual guidance' (III, 3; cf IV, 15), that is to say, under the immediate direction of anexperienced spiritual father. Gregory recommends the psychosomatic technique, but provides no detailedinstructions; probably he considered that these were best supplied orally and on a personal basis by each spiritualguide to his immediate disciples. Whereas Nikiphoros and The Three Methods seem to regard the technique as apreliminary exercise, preceding the actual invocation, Gregory's language suggests that the control of the breathingis to be simultaneous with the recitation of the Prayer, although he does not explain exactly how the two are to becoordinated (IV, 2; V, 1). Although endorsing the use of the bodily technique, he sees it as limited in value (V, 3, 7).He allows a certain flexibility as regards the precise formula of prayer that is to be employed, but he discourages thehesychast from making constant changes in the wording: 'For

' In references to Gregory's writings, the number of the work is given first in Roman numerals, followed by the number of the section in Arabicfigures. Thus I, 99 signifies On Commandments and Doctrines, text 99.

" On prayer as 'the shedding of thoughts', see Evagrios, On Prover 71; E.T., The Philokalia, vol. i, p. 64' Cf. St Diadochos of Photiki, On Spiitual Knowledge 36; E.T., The Philokalia, vol. i, p. 263.

plants which are frequently transplanted do not put down roots' (IV, 2; Cf V, 2).'

Of particular interest is the way in which St Gregory connects the Jesus Prayer with the sacrament of baptism.Prayer, he states, is 'baptism made manifest' (I, 113; cf I, 129). The aim of the Jesus Prayer, as of all prayer, is toreveal in a conscious and dynamically active way 'the energy of the Holy Spirit, which we have already mysticallyreceived in baptism' (III, 3). Through the invocation of the Holy Name, we are enabled to pass from the stage whenbaptismal grace is present in our hearts merely in a hidden and unconscious manner, to the point of full awarenessat which we experience the activity of this grace directly and consciously. While emphasizing the indwellingpresence of Christ through

baptism, Gregory does not make any explicit connection between the Jesus Prayer andthe eucharist, as we might have expected him to do. But in other contexts he does employ eucharistic imagery,speaking of prayer as an inner liturgy celebrated in the sanctuary of the heart, and likening the soul to a 'noetic altar'on which the Lamb of God is offered in mystical sacrifice (I, 112; Cf, I, 43)."

' In the manuscripts of Gregory's works there are many minor variations in the formulae given for the Jesus Prayer, and it is impossible to besure exactly what words Gregory recommended. Scribes naturally substituted the forms with which they were personally familiar.^ See Michel van Parys, 'La Liturgic du Coeur selon saint Gregoii'e le Sinaite', Iremkon li (1973), pp. 312-37.

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1. You cannot be or become spiritually intelligent in the way that is natural to

man in his pre-fallen state unlessyou first attain purity and freedom from corruption. For our purity has been overlaid by a state of sense-dominatedmmdlessness, and our original incorruption by the corruption of the flesh.

2. Only those who through their purity have become saints are spiritually intelligent in the way that is natural toman in his pre-fallen state. Mere skill in reasoning does not make a person's intelligence pure, for since the fall ourintelligence has been corrupted by evil thoughts. The materialistic and wordy spirit of the wisdom of this world maylead us to speak about ever wider spheres of knowledge, but it renders our thoughts increasingly crude and uncouth.This combination of well-informed talk and crude thought falls far short of real wisdom and contemplation, as well

as of undivided and unified knowledge.

3. By knowledge of truth understand above all apprehension of tmth through grace. Other kinds of knowledgeshould be regarded as images of intellections or the rational demonstration of facts.

4. If you fail to receive grace it is because of your lack of faith and your negligence; if you find it again it isbecause of your faith and your diligence. For faith and diligence always conduce to progress, while their oppositesdo the reverse.

5. To be utterly senseless is like being dead, and to be blind in intellect is like not seeing physically. To be utterlysenseless is to be deprived of life-giving energizing power; to be blind in intellect is to be

deprived of the divine light by which a man can see and be seen by God.

6. Few men receive both power and wisdom from God. Through power we partake of divine blessings; throughwisdom we manifest them. This participation and this communication to others is a truly divine gift, beyond man'sunaided

capacity.

7. A true sanctuary, even before the life to come, is a heart free from distractive thoughts and energized by theSpirit, for all is done and said there spiritually. If we do not attain such a state in this life, we may because of ourother virtues be a stone fit for building into the temple of God; but we will not ourselves be a temple or a celebrantof the Spirit.

8. Man is created incorruptible, without bodily humors, and thus he will be when resurrected. Yet he is not createdeither immutable or mutable, since he possesses the power to choose at will whether to be subject to change or notBut the will cannot confer total immutability of nature upon him. Such immutability is bestowed only when he hasattained the state of changeless deification.

9. Corruption is generated by the flesh. To feed, to excrete, to stride about and to sleep are the naturalcharacteristics of beasts and wild animals; acquiring these characteristics through the fall, we have become beast-like, losing the natural blessings bestowed on us by God. We have become brutal instead of spiritually intelligent,ferine instead of godlike.

10. Paradise is twofold - sensible and spiritual: there is the paradise of Eden and the paradise of grace. Theparadise of Eden is so exalted that it is said to extend to the third heaven. It has been planted by God with every kindof sweet-scented plant. It is neither entirely free from comiption nor altogether subject to it. Created betweencorruption and mcorruption, it is always rich in fruits, ripe and unripe, and continually full of flowers. When treesand ripe fruit rot and fall to the ground they turn into sweet-scented soil, free from the smell of decay exuded by thevegetable-matter of this world. That is because of the great richness and holiness of the grace ever abounding there.The river Ocean, appointed always to irrigate paradise with its waters, flows through the middle of it. On leavingparadise, it divides into four other rivers, and flowing down to the Indians and Ethiopians brings them soil and fallen

leaves. Their fields are flooded by the united rivers of Pison and Gihon until these[V4] 214

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divide again, the one watering Libya and the other the land of Egypt (rf. Gen. 2:8-14).

11. It is said that when the world was first created it was not subject to flux and corruption. According to Scriptureit was only later corrupted and 'made subject to vanity' - that is, to man - not by its own choice but by the will ofHim to whom it is subject, the expectation being that Adam, who had fallen into corruption, would be restored to hisoriginal state (cf Rom. 8:20-21). For by renewing man and sanctifying him, even though in this transient life hebears a corruptible body. God also renewed creation, although creation is not yet freed from the process ofcorruption. This deliverance from corruption is said by some to be a translation to a better state, by others to requirea complete transmutation of everything sensory. Scripture generally makes simple and straightforward statementsabout matters that are still obscure.

12. People who have received grace are as if impregnated and with child by the Holy Spirit; but they may abortthe divine seed through sinning, or divorce themselves from God through intercourse with the enemy lurking withinthem. It is the turbulence of the passions that aborts grace, while the act of sinning deprives us of it altogether. Apassion- and sin-loving soul, shorn of grace and divorced from God, is the haunt of passions - not to say of demons -in this world and the next.

13. Nothing so converts anger into joy and gentleness as courage and mercy. Like a siege-engine, courage shattersenemies attacking the soul from without, mercy those attacking it from within.

14. Many who practice the commandments think they are following the spiritual path. But they have not yetreached the city, and in fact remain outside it. For they travel foolishly, deviating unawares from the straighthighway into side-roads, not realizing how close the vices are to the path of virtue. For the trae fulfillment of thecommandments demands that we do neither too little nor too much but simply pursue a course acceptable to Godand in accordance with His will. Otherwise we labor in vain and do not make straight the paths of the Lord (cf. Isa.40:3). For in everything we do we must be clear about the goal we are pursuing.

15. To be on the spiritual path means seeking the Lord in your heart through fulfilling the commandments. Forwhen you listen to John the Baptist crying in

the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the Lord,

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make His paths straight' (Matt. 3:3), you must understand that he is referring to the commandments and theirfulfillment both in the heart and in actions. It is impossible to 'make straight' the path of the commandments and toact rightly unless your heart too is straight and upright.

16. When Scripture speaks of rod and staff (cf. Ps. 23:4), you should take these to signify in the prophetic sensejudgment and providence, and in the moral sense psalmody and prayer. For when we are chastened by the Lord withme rod of correction (cf 1 Cor. 11:32), this is so that we may learn how to mend our ways. And when we chastenour assailants with the rod of dauntless psalmody, we become established in prayer. Since we thus wield the rod andthe staff of spiritual action, let us not cease to chasten and be chastened until we are wholly in the hands ofprovidence and escape judgment both now and hereafter.

17. The essence of the commandments is always to give precedence to the one that embraces them all:mindfulness of God, as stipulated in the phrase, 'Always be mindful of the Lord your God' (cf. Deut. 8:18). Ourfailure or success in keeping the commandments depends on such mindfulness, for it is this that forgetfulness firstdestroys when it shrouds the commandments in darkness and strips us of every blessing.

18. Those engaged in spiritual warfare regain their original state by practicing two commandments - obedienceand fasting; for evil has infiltrated our human condition by means of their opposites. Those who keep thecommandments out of obedience return to God more quickly. Others who keep them by means of fasting and prayerreturn more slowly. Obedience befits beginners, fasting those in the middle way, who have attained a state ofspiritual enlightenment and self-mastery. To observe genuine obedience to God when practicing the commandmentsis something only very few can do, and proves difficult even for those who have attained a state of self-mastery.

19. According to St Paul, it is characteristic of the Spirit of life to act and speak

in the heart, while a literal,outwardly correct observance of things characterizes the Men unregenerate person (cf Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:6). TheSpirit of life frees the intellect from sin and death, whereas a literal, outwardly correct observance imperceptiblyturns us into Pharisees, since we then act only in an external bodily

sense and practice the commandments merely in order to be seen doing so (cf Matt. 23:5).

20. The whole complex of the commandments united and knit together m the Spirit (cf. Eph. 4:16) has itsanalogue in man, whether his state is perfect or imperfect. The commandments are the body. The virtues -established inner qualities - are the bones. Grace is the soul that lives and vivifies, energizing me vital power of thecommandments just as the soul animates the body. The degree of negligence or diligence with which a man tries toattain to Christ's stature reveals what stage he has reached. Alike in this world and in the next, it indicates whetherhe is in his spiritual infancy or has achieved maturity.

21. If you want the body of me commandments to nourish, you must zealously desire the pure spiritual milk ofmaternal grace (cf. 1 Pet. 2:2); for it is on this milk of grace that you must suckle yourself if you wish to increase

your stature in Christ. Wisdom yields fervor from her breasts as milk that helps you to grow; but to nourish theperfect she gives them the honey other purifying joy. 'Honey and milk are under your tongue' (Song of Songs 4:11):by 'milk' Solomon means the Spirit's nurturing and maturing power, while by 'honey' he means the Spirit'spurificatory power. St Paul likewise refers to the differing functions of these powers when he says, 'I have fed you aslittle children with milk, and not with meat' (cf. 1 Cor. 3:2).

22. To try to discover the meaning of the commandments through study and reading without actually living inaccordance with them is like mistaking the shadow of something for its reality. It is only by participating in the tmththat you can share in the meaning of truth. If you search for the meaning without participating in the truth andwithout having been initiated into it, you will find

only a besotted kind of wisdom (cf. 1 Cor. 1:20). You will beamong those whom St Jude categorized as 'psychic' or worldly because they lack the Spirit (cf Jude 19), boast asthey may of their knowledge of the truth.

23. The physical eye perceives the outward or literal sense of things and from it derives sensory images. Theintellect, once purified and reestablished in its pristine state, perceives God and from Him derives divine images.Instead of a book the intellect has the Spirit; instead of a pen, mind and tongue - 'my tongue is a pen', says mePsalmist (cf. Ps. 45:1); and instead of ink, light. So plunging the mind into the light that it becomes light, theintellect, guided by the Spirit, inscribes the

inner meaning of things in the pure hearts of those who listen. Then it grasps the significance of the statement thatthe faithful 'shall be taught by God' (cf. Isa. 54:13; John 6:45), and that through the Spirit God 'teaches manknowledge' (Ps. 94:10).

24. The efficacy of the commandments depends on faith working directly in the heart. Through faith eachcommandment kindles and activates the soul's illumination. The fruits of a true and effective faith are self-controland love, its consummation God-given humility, the source and support of love.

25. A right view of created things depends upon a truly spiritual knowledge of visible and invisible realities.Visible realities are objects perceived by the senses, while invisible realities are noetic, intelligent, intelligible anddivine.

25. Orthodoxy may be defined as the clear perception and grasp of the two dogmas of the faith, namely, theTrinity and the Duality. It is to know and contemplate the three Persons of the Trinity as distinctively and mdivisiblyconstituting the one God, and the divine and human natures of Christ as united in His single Person - that is to say,to know and profess that the single Son, both prior and subsequent to the Incarnation, is to be glorified in twonatures, divine and human, and in two wills, divme and human, the one distinct from the other.

27. Three unaltering and changeless properties typify the Holy Trinity: unbegottenness, begottenness andprocession. The Father is unbegotten and unonginate; the Son is begotten and also unoriginate; the Holy Spirit

proceeds from the Father through the Son, as St John of Damaskos says, and is equaUy coetemal.

28. Grace-imbued faith energized by the Spirit through our keeping of the commandments, alone suffices forsalvation, provided we sustain it and do not opt for a dead and ineffectual faith rather than for a living effective faithin Christ. To embody and give life to an effective faith in Christ all we need to do as believers. But nowadays wewho call ourselves orthodox believers have in our ignorance imbibed not the faith imbued with grace but a faith thatis merely a matter of words, dead and unfeeling.

29. The Trinity is simple unity, unqualified and uncompounded. It is three-in-one, for God is three-personed, eachperson wholly

interpenetrating the others without any loss of distinct personal identity.

30. God reveals and manifests Himself in all things in a threefold manner. In Himself He is undetermined; butthrough the Son in the Holy Spirit He sustains and watches over all things. And wherever He expresses Himself,none of the three Persons is manifest or to be perceived apart from or without the other two.

31. In man there is intellect, consciousness and spirit. There is neither intellect without consciousness norconsciousness without spirit: each subsists in the others and in itself. Intellect expresses itself through consciousnessand consciousness is manifested through the spirit In this way man is a dim image of the ineffable and archetypalTrinity, disclosing even now the divine image in which he is created.

32. When the divine fathers expound the doctrine of the supra-essential, holy and supernatural Trinity, theyillustrate it by saying that the Father truly corresponds

to the intellect, the Son to consciousness and the Holy Spiritto the spirit. Thus they bequeath to us the dogma of one God in three Persons as the hallmark of the true faith andthe anchor of hope. For, according to Scripture, to apprehend the one God is the root of immortality, and to know themajesty of the three-personed Monad is complete righteousness (cf Wisd. 15:3). Again, we should read what is saidin the Gospel in the same way: eternal life is to know Thee the only true God in three Persons, and Him whom Thouhast sent, Jesus Christ, in two natures and two wills (cf John 17:3).

33. Chastisements differ, as do the rewards of the righteous. Chastisements are inflicted in hell, in what Scripturedescribes as 'a dark and gloomy land, a land of eternal darkness' (Job 10:21-22. LXX), where sinners dwell beforethe judgment and whither they return after judgment is given. For can the phrases, 'Let sinners be returned to hell'(Ps. 9:17. LXX), and 'death will rule over them' (Ps. 49:14. LXX), refer to anything other than the final judgmentvisited upon sinners, and their eternal condemnation?

34. Fire, darkness, the worm and the nether world correspond to ubiquitous self-indulgence, total tenebrificignorance, all-pervasive, lecherous titivation, and the tearfulness and foul stench of sin. Already even now they canbe seen to be active, as foretastes and first fruits of hell's torments, in sinners in whose soul they have taken root.

35. Passion-embroiled states are foretastes of hell's torments, just[V4] 219

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as the activity of the virtues is a foretaste of the kingdom of heaven. We must realize that the commandments areactivities producing effects, and that virtues are states, just as vices that have taken root are also states.

36. Requitals correspond to our deserts, even if many people think they do not. To some, divine justice giveseternal life; to others, eternal chastisement. Each will be requited according to his actions -according to whether hehas passed through this present life in a virtuous or in a sinful manner. The degree or quality of the requital willaccord with the state induced in each by either the passions or the virtues, and the differing effects these have had.

37. Lakes of fire (cf. Rev. 19:20) signify self-indulgent souls. In these lakes the stench of the passions, like fetidbogs, nourishes the sleepless worm of dissipation - the unbridled lusts of the flesh - as it also nourishes the snakes,frogs and leeches of evil desire, the loathsome and poisonous thoughts and demons. A soul in such a state already inthis life receives a foretaste of the chastisement to come.

38. As the firsttruits of future chastisement are secretly present in the souls of sinners, so the foretaste of futureblessings is present and experienced in the hearts of the righteous through the activity of the Spirit. For a life livedvirtuously is the kingdom of heaven, just as a passion-embroiled state is hell.

39. The coming night of which Christ speaks (cf John 9:4) is the complete inertia of hell's darkness. Or,interpreted differently, it is antichrist, who is, and is called, both night and darkness. Or alternatively, according tothe moral sense, it is our daily negligence which, like a dark night, deadens the soul in insensate sleep. For just asthe night makes all men sleep and is the image of the lifelessness of death, so the night of hell's darkness deadensand stupefies sinners with the sottishness of pain.

40. Judgment upon this world (cf. John 12:31) is synonymous with ungodly lack of faith; for 'he who lacks faith isalready judged' (John 3:18). It is also a providential visitation restraining us or turning us back from sm, andlikewise a way of testing whether by inner disposition we incline towards good or evil actions; for according to thePsalmist, 'The wicked are estranged from the womb' (Ps. 58:3). Thus God manifests His judgment either because ofour lack of faith, or to discipline us. or to test which way our actions gravitate. Some He chastens, to others He ismerciful; on some He bestows

crowns of glory, others He visits with the torments of hell. Those whom He chastens are the utterly godless.Those to whom He shows mercy possess faith, but at the same time they are negligent, and it is for this reason thatthey are compassionately chastised. Those consummate either in virtue or in wickedness

receive their rewardsaccordingly.

41. If our human nature is not kept pure or else restored to its original purity by the Holy Spirit, it cannot becomeone body and one spirit in Christ, either in this life or in the harmonious order of the life to come. For the all-embracing and unifying power of the Spirit does not complete the new garment of grace by sewing on to it a patchtaken from the old garment of the passions (cf. Matt. 9:16).

42. Every person who has been renewed in the Spirit and has preserved this gift will be transformed and embodiedin Christ, experiencing ineffably the supernatural state of deification. But he will not hereafter be one with Christ orbe engrafted into His body unless in this life he has come to share in divine grace and has embodied spiritualknowledge and truth.

43. The kingdom of heaven is like the tabernacle which was built by God, and which He disclosed to Moses as apattern (cf. Exod. 25:40); for it too has an outer and an inner sanctuary. Into the first will enter all who are priests ofgrace. But into the second - which is noetic - will enter only those who in this life have attained the divine darknessof theological wisdom and there as true hierarchs have celebrated the triadic liturgy, entering into the tabernacle thatJesus Himself has set up, where He acts as their consecrator and chief Hierarch before the Trinity, and illuminesthem ever more richly with His own splendor.

44. By 'many dwelling-places' (John 14:2) the Savior meant the differing stages of spiritual ascent and states ofdevelopment in the other world; for although the kingdom of heaven is one, there are many different levels within it.That is to say, there is place for both heavenly and earthy men (cf. 1 Cor. 15:48) according to their virtue, theirknowledge and the degree of deification that they have attained. 'For there is one glory of the sun, and another gloryof the moon, and another glory of the stars, for one star differs from another star in

glory' (1 Cor. 15:41); and yet all of them shine in a single divine firmament.

45. You partake of angelic life and attain an incorruptible and hence almost bodiless state when you have cleansedyour intellect through tears, have through the power of the Spirit resurrected your soul even in this life, and with thehelp of the Logos have made your flesh - your natural human form of clay - a resplendent and fiery image of divinebeauty. For bodies become incorruptible when rid of their natural humors and their material density.

46. The body in its incorruptible state will be earthy, but it will be without humors or material density,indescribably transmuted from an unspintual body into a spiritual body (cf. 1 Cor. 15:44), so that it will be in itsgodlike refinement and subtleness both earthy and heavenly. Its state when it is resurrected will be the same as thatin which it was originally created - one in which it conforms to the image of the Son of Man (cf. Rom. 8:29; Phil.

3:21) through fuU participation in His divinity.

47. The land of the gentle (of. Ps. 37:11) is the kingdom of heaven. Or else it is the theandnc state of the Son,which we have attained or are in the process of attaining, having through grace been reborn as sons of God into thenew life of the resurrection. Or again, the holy land is our human nature when it has been divinized or, it may be, theland purified according to the measure of those dwelling in it. Or, according to another interpretation, it is the landgranted as an inheritance (cf. Numb. 34:13) to those who are truly saints, the untroubled and divine serenity and thepeace that transcends the intellect (cf. Phil. 4:7) - the land wherein the righteous dwell quietly and unmolested.

48. The promised land is dispassion, from which spiritual joy flows like milk and honey (cf. Exod. 13:5).

49. The saints in heaven hold inner converse together, communicating mystically through the power of the HolySpirit.

50. If we do not know what we are like when God makes us, we shall not realize what sin has turned us into.

51. All who have received the fullness of the perfection of Christ in this life are of equal spiritual stature.

52. Rewards correspond to labors. But their quantity or quality -that is to say, their measure - will be shown by theposition and state in heaven of those who

receive them.

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53. According to Scripture the saints, the sons of Christ's resurrection, through incorruption and deification willbecome intellects, that is to say, equal to the angels (cf Luke 20:36).

54. It is said that in the life to come the angels and saints ever increase in gifts of grace and never abate theirlonging for further blessings. No lapse or veering from virtue to vice takes place in that life.

55. A person is perfect in this life when as a pledge of what is to come he receives the grace to assimilate himselfto the various stages of Christ's life. In the life to come perfection is made manifest through the power of deification.

56. If by passing through the different stages of spiritual growth you become perfect in virtue during this life, youwill attain a state of deification in the life hereafter equal to that of your peers.

57. It is said that true belief is knowledge or contemplation of the Holy Spirit. It is also said that scrupulousdiscernment in matters of dogma constitutes full knowledge of the true faith.

58. Rapture means the total elevation of the soul's powers towards the majesty of divine glory, disclosed as anundivided unity. Or again rapture is a pure and all-embracing ascent towards the limitless power that dwells in light.Ecstasy is not only the heavenward ravishing of the soul's powers; it is also complete transcendence of the sense-world itself. Intense longing for God - there are two forms of it - is a spiritual intoxication that arouses our desire.

59. As just remarked, there are two main forms of ecstatic longing for God: one within the heart and the other anenravishment taking one beyond oneself. The first pertains to those who are still in the process of achieving

illumination, the second to those perfected in love. Both, acting on the intellect,

transport it beyond the sense-world.Such longing for the divine is truly a spiritual intoxication, impelling natural thoughts towards higher states anddetaching the senses from their involvement with visible things.

60. The source and ground of our distractive thoughts is the fragmented state of our memory. The memory wasoriginally simple and one-pointed, but as a result of the fall its natural powers have been perverted: it has lost itsrecollectedness in God and has become compound instead of simple, diversified instead of one-pointed.

61. We recover the original state of our memory by restoring it to[V4] 223

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its primal simplicity, when it will no longer act as a source of evil and destructive thoughts. For Adam'sdisobedience has not only deformed into a weapon of evil the soul's simple memory of what is good; it has alsocorrupted all its powers and quenched its natural appetite for virtue. The memory is restored above all by constantmindfulness of God consolidated through prayer, for this spiritually elevates the memory from a natural to asupernatural state.

62. Sinful acts provoke passions, the passions provoke distractive thoughts, and distractive thoughts provokefantasies. The fragmented memory begets a multiplicity of ideas, forgetfulness causes the fragmentation of thememory, ignorance leads to forgetfulness, and laziness to ignorance. Laziness is spawned by lustful appetites,appetites are aroused by misdirected emotions, and misdirected emotions by committing sinful acts. A sinful act isprovoked by a mindless desire for evil and a strong attachment to the senses and to sensory things.

63. Distractive thoughts arise and are activated in the soul's intelligent faculty, violent passions in the incensivefaculty, the memory of bestial appetites in the desiring faculty, imaginary forms in the mind, and ideas in theconceptualizing faculty.

64. The irruption of evil thoughts is like the current of a river. We are provoked to sin by such thoughts, and whenas a result of this we give our assent to sin our heart is overwhelmed as though by a turbulent flood.

65. By the 'deep mire' (Ps. 69:2) understand slimy sensual pleasure, or the sludge of lechery, or the burden ofmaterial things. Weighed down by all this the impassioned intellect casts itself into the depths of despair.

66. Scripture often calls thoughts motives for actions, just as it also calls these motives mental images and,conversely, calls mental images motives. This is because the point of departure for such actions, although in itselfimmaterial, is embodied through them and changed into a particular visible form. Thus the sin that is provoked isidentified and named according to its external manifestation.

67. Distractive thoughts are the promptings of the demons and precursors of the passions, just as such promptingsand mental images are also the precursors of particular actions. There can be no action, either for good or evil, that isnot initially provoked by the particular thought of that action; for thought is the impulse.

non-visible in form, that provokes us to act at all, whatever the action may be.

68. The raw material of actions generates neutral thoughts, while demonic provocation begets evil thoughts. Thuswhen they are compared it is clear that there is a difference between motives and thoughts that accord with natureand those which are either Contrary to nature or supernatural.

69. Thoughts in different classes of people are equally prone to change, thoughts that accord with naturebecoming either thoughts contrary to nature or, alternatively, becoming thoughts that transcend nature. Occasionsfor these changes are provided, in the case of evil-minded people, by thoughts suggested by material things; whereasin the case of those who are materially-minded they are provided by demonic provocation. Similarly, in the case ofsaints, it is thoughts that accord with nature that provide the occasion for this change, such thoughts generatingthoughts that transcend nature. For the motivating occasions and grounds for these changes of the various types ofthought into their congenerate types are fourfold: material, demonic, natural and supernatural.

70. Occasions give rise to distractive thoughts, thoughts to fantasies, fantasies to the passions, and the passionsgive entry to the demons. It is as if there were a certain cunningly devised sequence and order among the disorderedspirits, one thing following and derived from another. But no one thing in the sequence is self-operative: each isprompted and activated by the demons. Fantasy is not wrought into an image, passion is not energized, withoutunperceived hidden demonic impulsion. For even though Satan has fallen and is shattered, he is still stronger thanwe are and exults over us because of our sloth.

71. The demons fill our minds with images; or, rather, they clothe themselves in images that correspond to thecharacter of the most dominant and active passion in our soul, and in this way they provoke us to give our assent tothat passion. For the demons use the state of passion as an occasion for stirring up images. Thus, whether we areawake or asleep, they visit us with varied and diverse imaginings. The demons of desire turn themselves sometimesinto pigs, sometimes into donkeys, sometimes into fiery stallions avid for copulation, and sometimes - particularlythe demons of licentiousness - into Israelites. The demons of wrath turn themselves sometimes into gentiles andsometimes into lions. The demons of cowardice take on the form

of Ishmaelites, those of licentiousness the form of Idumaeans, and those of drunkenness and dissipation the formof Hagarenes. The demons of greed appear sometimes as wolves and sometimes as leopards, those of malice assume

the form sometimes of snakes, sometimes of vipers, and sometimes of foxes, those of shamelessness the form ofdogs and those of listlessness the form of cats. FinaUy there are the demons of lechery, that turn sometimes intosnakes and sometimes into crows and jackdaws. Carnal-minded demons, particularly those dwelling in the air,transform themselves into birds. Our fantasy transmutes the images of the demons in a threefold mannercorresponding to the tripartite nature of the soul: into birds, wild animals and domestic animals, that correspondrespectively to the desiring, mcensive and intelligent aspect of the soul. For the three princes of the passions arealways ready to wage war on these

three powers of the soul. Whatever the passion that dominates the soul, theyassume a form that corresponds to it and thus they insinuate themselves into us.

72. The demons of sensual pleasure often attack us in the form of fire and coals. For the spirits of self-indulgencekindle the soul's desiring faculty, while they also confuse the intelligence and plunge it into darkness. The chiefcause of lustful burning and mental confusion and beclouding lies in the sensuality of the passions.

73. The night of the passions is the darkness of ignorance. Or alternatively the night is the state which begets thepassions, where the prince of darkness rules, and where the beasts of the field, the birds of the air and the creepingthings of the earth have their dwelling, these being allegorical terms for the roving spirits that seek to lay hold of usin order to devour us (cf Ps. 104:20).

74. Some distractive thoughts precede the activity of the passions and others follow it. Such thoughts precedefantasies, while passions are sequent to fantasies. The passions precede demons, while demons follow the passions.

75. The cause and origin of the passions is the misuse of things. Such misuse results from perversion of ourcharacter. Perversion expresses the bias of the will, and the state of our will is tested by demonic provocation. Thedemons thus are permitted by divine providence to demonstrate to us the specific state of our will.

76. The lethal poison of the sting of sin is the soul's passion-charged state. For if by your own free choice youallow yourself to be

dominated by the passions you will develop a firm and unchanging propensity to sin.

77. The passions are variously named. They are divided into those pertaining to the body and those pertaining tothe soul. The bodily passions are subdivided into those that involve suffering and those that are sinful. The passionsthat induce

suffering are further subdivided into those connected with disease and those connected with correctivediscipline. The passions pertaining to the soul are divided according to whether they affect the incensive, appetitiveor intelligent aspect of the soul. Those connected with the intelligence are subdivided into those affecting theimagination and those affecting the understanding. Of these some are the result of the deliberate misuse of things;others we suffer against our will, out of necessity, and for these we are not culpable. The fathers have also calledthem concomitants and natural idiosyncrasies.

78. The passions that pertain to the body differ from those that pertain to the soul; those affecting the appetitive

faculty differ from those affecting the incensive faculty; and those of the intelligence differ from those of theintellect and the reason. But all intercommunicate, and all collaborate, the bodily passions with those of theappetitive faculty, passions of the soul with those of the incensive faculty, passions of the intelligence with those ofthe intellect, and passions of the intellect with those of the reason and of the memory.

79. The passions of the incensive faculty are anger, animosity, shouting, bad temper, self-assertion, conceit,boastfulness, and so on. The passions of the appetitive faculty are greed, licentiousness, dissipation, insatiateness,self-indulgence, avarice and self-love, which is the worst of all. The passions of the flesh are unchastity, adultery,uncleanliness, profligacy, injustice, gluttony, listlessness, ostentation, self-adornment, cowardice and so on. Thepassions of the intelligence are lack of faith, blasphemy, malice, cunning, mquisitiveness, duplicity, abuse,backbiting, censonousness, vilification, frivolous talk, hypocrisy, lying, foul talk, foolish chatter, deceitfulness,sarcasm, self-display, love of popularity, day-dreaming, perjury, gossiping and so on. The passions of the intellectare self-conceit, pomposity, arrogance, quarrelsomeness, envy, self-satisfaction, contentiousness, inattentiveness,fantasy, fabrication, swaggering, vainglory and pride, the beginning and end of all the vices. The passions of thereason are dithering, distraction, captivation, obfuscation, blindness, abduction,

provocation, connivance in sin, bias, perversion, instability of mind and similar things. In short, all the unnaturalvices commingle with the three faculties of the soul, just as all the virtues naturally coexist within them.

80. How eloquent is David when he speaks to God in ecstasy, saying, 'Thy knowledge is too wonderful for me; Icannot attain to it' (cf. Ps. 139:6), for it exceeds my feeble knowledge and my powers. How incomprehensible,indeed, is even this flesh in the way it has been constituted: it too is triadic in every detail, and yet a single harmonyembraces its limbs and parts; in addition it is graced by the numbers seven and two which, according tomathematicians, signify time and creation. Thus it, too, when perceived according to the laws at work in creation, isto be seen as an organ of God's glory manifesting His triadic magnificence.

81. The laws of creation are the qualities inventing wholes compounded of energized parts - qualities also knownas generic differences, since they invest many different composites constituted from identical properties. Or gainthe natural law is the potential power to energize inherent in each species and in each part. As God does with respectto the whole of creation, so does the soul with respect to the body: it energizes and impels each member of the bodyin accordance with the energy intrinsic to that member. At this point it must be asked why the holy fatherssometimes say that anger and desire are powers pertaining to the body and sometimes that they are powerspertaining to the soul. Assuredly, the words of the saints never disagree if they are carefully examined. In this case,both statements are true, if correctly understood in context. For indescribably body and soul are brought into beingin such a way that they coexist. The soul is in a state of perfection from the start, but the body is imperfect since ithas to grow through taking nourishment. The soul by virtue of its creation as a deifonn and intellective entitypossesses an intrinsic power of desire and an intrinsic mcensive power, and these lead it to manifest both courage

and divine love. For senseless anger and mindless desire were not created along with the soul. Nor originally didthey pertain to the body. On the contrary, when the body was created it was free from corruption and without thehumors from which such desire and uncontrollable rage arise. But after the fall anger and desire were necessarilygenerated within it, for then it became subject to the corruption and gross materiality of the instinct-driven

animals. That is why when the body has the upper hand it opposes the will of the soul through anger and desire.But when what is mortal is made subject to the intelligence it assists the soul in doing what is good. For whencharacteristics that do not originally pertain to the body but have subsequently infiltrated into it become entangledwith the soul, man becomes like an animal (cf Ps. 49:20), since he is now necessarily subject to the law of sin. Heceases to be an intelligent human being and becomes beast-like.

82. When God through His life-giving breath created the soul deiform and intellective. He did not implant in itanger and desire that are animal-like. But He did endow it with a power of longing and aspiration, as well as with acourage responsive to divine love. Similarly when God formed the body He did not originally implant in itinstinctual anger and desire. It was only afterwards, through the fall, that it was invested with these characteristicsthat have rendered it mortal, corruptible and animal-like. For the body, even though susceptive of corruption, wascreated, as theologians will tell us, free from corruption, and that is how it will be resurrected. In the same way thesoul when originally created was dispassionate. But soul and body have both been denied, commingled as they arethrough the natural law of mutual mterpenetration and exchange. The soul has acquired the qualities of the passionsor, rather, of the demons; and the body, passing under the sway of corruption because of its fallen state, has becomeakin to instinct-driven animals. The powers of body and soul have merged together and have produced a singleanimal, driven impulsively and mindlessly by anger and desire. That is how man has sunk to the level of animals, asScripture testifies, and has become like them in every respect (cf. Ps. 49:20).

83. The principle and source of the virtues is a good disposition of the will, that is to say, an aspiration forgoodness and beauty. God is the source and ground of all supernal goodness. Thus the principle of goodness andbeauty is faith or, rather, it is Christ, the rock of faith, who is principle and foundation of all the virtues. On this rockwe stand and on this foundation we build every good thing (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11). Christ is the capstone (cf Eph. 2:20)uniting us with Himself. He

is the pearl of great price (c£ Matt. 13:46): it is this for which the monk seeks when heplunges into the depths of stillness and it is this for which he sells all his own desires through obedience to thecommandments, so that he may acquire it even in this life.

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84. The virtues are all equal and together reduce themselves to one, thus constituting a single principle and formof virtue. But some virtues - such as divine love, humility and divine patience - are greater than others, embracingand comprising as they do a large number or even all of the rest. With regard to patience the Lord says, 'You willgain possession of your souls through your patient endurance' (Luke 21:19). He did not say 'through your fasting' or'through your vigils'. I refer to the patience bestowed by God, which is the queen of virtues, the foundation ofcourageous actions. It is patience that is peace amid strife, serenity amid distress, and a steadfast base for those whoacquire it. Once you have attained it with the help of Christ Jesus, no swords and spears, no attacking armies, noteven the ranks of demons, the dark phalanx of hostile powers, will be able to do you any harm.

85. The virtues, though they beget each other, yet have their origin in the three powers of the soul - all exceptthose virtues that are divine. For the ground and principle of the four cardinal virtues, both natural and divine -sound understanding, courage, self-restraint and justice, the progenitors of all the other virtues - is the divineWisdom that inspires those who have attained a state of mystical prayer. This Wisdom operates in a fourfold mannerin the intellect. It activates not all the four virtues simultaneously, but each one individually, as is appropriate and asit determines. It activates sound understanding in the form of light, courage as clear-sighted power and ever-movinginspiration, self-restraint as a power of sanctification and purification, and justice as the dew of purity, joy-inducingand cooling the arid heat of the passions. In every one who has attained the state of perfection it activates each virtuefully, in the appropriate form.

86. The pursuit of the virtues through one's own efforts does not confer complete strength on the soul unless gracetransforms them into an essential inner disposition. Each virtue is endowed with its own specific gift of grace, itsown particular energy, and thus possesses the capacity to produce such a disposition and blessed state in those whoattain it even when they have not consciously sought for any such state. Once a virtue has been bestowed on us itremains unchanged and unfailing. For just as a living soul activates the body's members, so the grace of the HolySpirit activates the virtues. Without such grace the whole bevy of the virtues is moribund; and m those who appearto have attained them, or to be in the way of attaining them, solely through

their own efforts they are but shadows and prefigurations of beauty, not the reality itself.

87. The cardinal virtues are four: courage, sound understanding, self-restraint and justice. There are eight othermoral qualities, that either go beyond or fall short of these virtues. These we regard as vices, and so we call them;but non-spiritual people regard them as virtues and that is what they call them. Exceeding or falling short of courageare audacity and cowardice, of sound understanding are cunning and ignorance; of self-restraint are licentiousnessand obtuseness; of justice are excess and injustice, or taking less than one's due. In between, and superior to, what

goes beyond or what falls short of them, lie not only the cardinal and natural virtues, but also the practical virtues.These are consolidated by resolution combined with probity of character; the others by perversion and self-conceit.That the virtues lie along the midpoint or axis of rectitude is testified to by the proverb, 'You will attain every well-founded axis' (Prov. 2:9. LXX). Thus when they are all established in the soul's three faculties in which they arebegotten and built up, they have as their foundation the four cardinal virtues or, rather, Christ Himself. In this waythe natural virtues are purified through the practical virtues, while the divine and supra-natural virtues are conferredthrough the bounty of the Holy Spirit.

88. Among the virtues some are practical, others are natural, and others are divine and conferred by the HolySpirit. The practical virtues are the products of our resolution, the natural virtues are built into us when we arecreated, the divine virtues are the fruits of grace.

89. Just as the virtues are begotten in the soul, so are the passions. But the virtues are begotten in accordance withnature, the passions in a mode contrary to nature. For what produces good or evil in the soul is the will's bias: it islike the joint of a pair of compasses or the pivot of a pair of scales: whichever way it inclines, so it will determinethe consequences. For our inner disposition is capable of operating in one way or another, since it bears within itselfboth virtue and vice, the first as its natural birthright, the second as the result of the self-incurred proclivity of ourmoral will.

90. Scripture calls the virtues 'maidens' (cf Song of Songs 1:3) because through their close union with the soulthey become one with it in spirit and body. In the same way as a girl's beauty is emblematic of her love, the presenceof these holy virtues expresses our inner purity and saintliness. Grace habitually gives to divine things an outwardform

that accords with their inner nature, at the same time unerringly molding those receptive to it in a way thatcorresponds to this nature.

91. There are eight ruling passions: gluttony, avarice and self-esteem - the three principal passions; andunchastity, anger, dejection, listlessness and arrogance - the five subordinate passions. In the same way, among thevirtues opposed to these there are three that are all-embracing, namely, total shedding of possessions, self-controland humility, and five deriving from them, namely, purity, gentleness, joy, courage, and self-belittlement - and thencome all the other virtues. To study and recognize the power, action and special flavor of each virtue and vice is notwithin the competence of everyone who wishes to do so; it is the prerogative of those who practice and experiencethe virtues actively and consciously and who receive from the Holy Spirit the gifts of cognitive insight

anddiscrimination.

92. Virtues either energize in us or are energized by us. They energize in us by being present in us when it isappropriate, when they will, for as long as they will and in whatever manner they will. We energize them ourselves

according to our resolve and the moral state of our capabilities. But they energize in us by virtue of their ownessence, whereas we energize them merely in an imitative way, by modeling our moral conduct upon them. For allour actions are but typifications of the divine archetypes; and few indeed are those who participate concretely innoetic realities before they enjoy the eternal blessings of the life to come. In this life we mainly activate and makeour own not the virtues themselves but their reflections and the ascetic toil they require.

93. According to St Paul (cf Rom. 15:16), you 'minister' the Gospel only when, having yourself participated inthe light of Christ, you can pass it on actively to others. Then you sow the Logos like a divine seed in the fields ofyour listeners' souls. 'Let your speech be always filled with grace', says St Paul (Col. 4:6), 'seasoned' with divinegoodness. Then it will impart grace to those who listen to you with faith. Elsewhere St Paul, calling the teacherstillers and their pupils the fields they till (cf 2 Tim. 2:6), wisely presents the former as plowers and sowers of thedivine Logos and the latter as the fertile soil, yielding a rich crop of virtues. True ministry is not simply a celebrationof sacred rites; it also involves participation in divine blessings and the communication of these blessings to others.

94. Oral teaching for the guidance of others has many forms,[V4] 232

varying in accordance with the diverse ways in which it is put together from different sources. These sources arefour in number: instruction, reading, ascetic practice, and grace. For just as water, while essentially the same,changes and acquires a distinctive quality according to the composition of the soil under it, so that it tastes bitter, orsweet, or brackish, or acidic, so oral teaching, colored as it is by the moral state of the teacher, varies accordingly inthe way it operates and in the benefits it confers.

95. Oral teaching is something to be enjoyed by all intelligent beings. But just as there are many different kinds offood, so the recipient of this teaching experiences its pleasure in a variety of ways. Instruction moulds the moralcharacter; teaching by reading is like 'still waters' that nourish and restore the soul (cf Ps. 23:2); teaching throughascetic practice is like 'green pastures', strengthening it (cf. Ps. 23:2); while teaching imparted through grace is like acup that intoxicates it (cf. Ps. 23:5. LXX), filling it with unspeakable joy, or else it is like oil that exhilarates the faceand makes it radiant (cf. Ps. 104:15).

96. Strictly speaking the soul possesses these various forms of teachings within itself as part of its own life; butwhen it learns about them through listening to others it becomes conscious of them, provided it listens with faith andprovided the teacher teaches with love, speaking of the virtues without vanity or self-esteem. Then the soul isdisciplined by instruction, nourished by reading, graciously escorted to her wedding by the deeply-rooted teachingthat derives from ascetic practice, and receives the illuminative teaching of the Holy Spirit as a bridegroom whounites her to Himself and fills her with delight. 'Every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God' (Matt. 4:4)denotes the words that, inspired by the Holy Spirit, issue from the mouths of the saints - an inspiration granted not toall but only to those who are worthy. For although all intelligent beings take pleasure in knowledge, very few arethose in this world who are consciously filled with joy by the wisdom of the Spirit; most of us only know and

participate through the power of memory in the images and reflections of spiritual wisdom, for we do not yet withfull awareness partake of the Logos of God, the true celestial bread. But in the life to come this bread is the sole foodof me saints, proffered in such abundance that it is never exhausted, depleted, or immolated anew.

97. Without spiritual perception you cannot consciously[V4] 233

experience the delight of divine things. If you dull your physical senses you make them insensible to sensorythings, and you neither see, hear nor smell, but are paralyzed or, rather, half-dead; similarly, if through the passionsyou deaden

the natural powers of your soul you make them insensible to the activity of the mysteries of the Spiritand you cannot participate in them. If you are spiritually blind, deaf and insensible you are as dead: Christ does notlive in you, and you do not live and act in Christ.

98. The physical senses and the soul's powers have an equal and similar, not to say identical, mode of operation,especially when they are in a healthy state: far then the soul's powers live and act through the senses, and the life-giving Spirit sustains them both. A man is truly ill when he succumbs to the generic malady of the passions andspends his whole time in the sickroom of inertia. When there is no satanic battle between them, making them rejectthe rule of the intellect and of the Spirit, the senses clearly perceive sensory things, the soul's powers mtelligiblethings; for when they are united through the Spirit and constitute a single whole, they know directly and essentiallythe nature of divine and human things. They contemplate with clarity the logoi, or inward essences of these things,and distinctly perceive, so far as is possible, the single source of all things, the Holy Trinity.

99. He who practices hesychasm must acquire the following five virtues, as a foundation on which to build:silence, self-control, vigilance, humility and patience. Then there are three practices blessed by God: psalmody,prayer and reading - and handiwork for those weak in body. These virtues which we have listed not only embrace allthe rest but also consolidate each other. From early morning the hesychast must devote himself to the remembranceof God through prayer and stillness of heart, praying diligently in the first hour, reading in the second, chantingpsalms in the third, praying in the fourth, reading in the fifth, chanting psalms in the sixth, praying in the seventh,reading in the eighth, chanting psalms in the ninth, eating in the tenth, sleeping in the eleventh, if need be, andreciting vespers in the twelfth hour. Thus fruitfully spending the course of the day he gains God's blessings.

100. Like a bee one should extract from each of the virtues what is most profitable. In this way, by taking a smallamount from all of them, one builds up from the practice of the virtues a great honeycomb overflowing with thesoul-delighting honey of wisdom.

101. Now hear, if you will, how it is best to spend the night. For the

night vigil there are three programs: for beginners, for those midway on the path, and for the perfect. The firstprogram is as follows: to sleep half the night and to keep vigil for the other half, either from evening till midnight orfrom midnight till dawn. The second is to keep vigil after nightfall for one or two hours, then to sleep for four hours,then to rise for matins and to chant psalms and pray for six hours until daybreak, then to chant the first hour, andafter that to sit down and practice stillness, in the way already described. Then one can either follow the program ofspiritual work given for the daylight hours, or else continue in unbroken prayer, which gives a greater inner stability.The third program is to stand and keep vigil uninterruptedly throughout the night.

102. Now let us say something about food. A pound of bread is sufficient for anyone aspiring to attain the state ofinner stillness. You may drink two cups of undiluted wine and three of water. Your food should consist of whateveris at hand - not whatever your natural craving seeks, but what providence provides, to be eaten sparingly. The bestand shortest guiding rule for those who wish to live as they should is to maintain the threefold all-embracingpractices of fasting, vigilance and prayer, for these provide a most powerful support for all the other virtues.

103. Stillness requires above all faith, patience, love with all one's heart and strength and might (cf. Deut. 6:5),and hope. For if you have faith, even though because of negligence or some other fault you fail to attain what youseek in this life, you will on leaving this life most certainly be vouchsafed the fruit of faith and spiritual struggle andwill behold your liberation, which is Jesus Christ, the redemption and salvation of souls, the Logos who is both Godand man. But if you lack faith, you will certainly be condemned on leaving this world. In fact, as the Lord says, youare condemned already (cf. John 3:18). For if you are a slave to sensual pleasure, and want to be honored by otherpeople rather than by God (cf. John 5:44.), you lack faith, even though you may profess faith verbally; and youdeceive yourself without realizing it. And you will incur the rebuke: 'Because you did not receive Me in your heartbut cast Me out behind your back, I too will reject you' (ef Ezek. 5:11). If you possess faith you should have hope,and believe in God's truth to which the whole of Scripture bears witness, and confess your own weakness; otherwiseyou will inescapably receive double condemnation.

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104. Nothing so fills the heart with contrition and humbles the soul as solitude embraced with self-awareness, andutter silence. And nothing so destroys the state of inner stillness and takes away the divine power that comes from itas the following six universal passions: insolence, gluttony, talkativeness, distraction, pretentiousness and themistress of the passions, self-conceit. Whoever commits himself to these passions plunges himself progressively into

darkness until he becomes completely insensate. But if he comes to himself again and with faith and ardor makes afresh start, he will once more attain what he seeks, especially if he seeks it with humility. Yet if through hisnegligence even one of the passions that we have mentioned gets a hold on him once more, then the whole host ofevils, including pernicious lack of faith, moves in and attacks him, devastating his soul till it becomes like anothercity of Babylon, full of diabolical turmoil and confusion (cf. Isa. 13:21). Then the last state of the person to whomthis happens is worse than his first (cf. Matt. 12:45), and he turns into a violent enemy and defamer of thosepursuing the path of hesychasm, always whetting his tongue against them like a sharp double-edged sword.

105. Once the waters of the passions, like a turbid and chaotic sea, have flooded the soul's state of stillness, thereis no way of crossing over them except in the light swift-winged barque of self-control and total poverty. For whenbecause of our dissipation and enslavement to materiality the torrents of the passions inundate the soil of the heart,they deposit there all the filth and sludge of evil thoughts, befouling the intellect, muddying the reason, clogging thebody, and slackening, darkening and deadening soul and heart, depriving them of their natural stability andresponsiveness.

106. Nothing so makes the soul of those striving to advance on the spiritual path sluggish, apathetic and mindlessas self-love, that pimp of the passions. For whenever it induces us to choose bodily ease rather than virtue-promoting hardship, or to regard it as positive good sense not willingly to burden ourselves with ascetic labor,especially with respect to the light exertions involved in practicing the commandments, then it causes the soul torelax its efforts to attain

a state of stillness, and produces in it a strong, irresistible sense of indolence and slackness.

107. If you are feeble in practicing the commandments yet want to expel your inner murkiness, the best and mostefficient physic is

trustful unhesitating obedience in all things. This remedy, distilled 'from many virtues, restores vitality and acts as aknife which at a single stroke cuts away festering sores. If, then, in total trust and simplicity you choose this remedyout of all alternatives you excise every passion at once. Not only will you reach the state of stillness but also throughyour obedience you will fully enter into it, having found Christ and become His imitator and servitor in name andact.

108. Unless your life and actions are accompanied by a sense of inner grief you cannot endure the incandescenceof stillness. If with this sense of grief you meditate - before they come to pass - on the many terrors that await usprior to and after death you will achieve both patience and humility, the twin foundations of stillness. Without themyour efforts to attain stillness will always be accompanied by apathy and self-conceit. From these will arise a host ofdistractions and day-dreams, all inducing sluggishness. In their wake comes dissipation, daughter of indolence,making the body sluggish and slack and the intellect benighted and callous. Then Jesus is hidden, concealed by thethrong of thoughts and images that crowd the mind (cf. John 5:13).

109. The torments of conscience in this life or the life to come are experienced with full awareness not byeveryone but only by those who in this world or the next are deprived of divine glory and love. Such torment is likea fearful torturer punishing the guilty in various ways, or like a sharp sword striking with pitiless indignation andreproach. Once our conscience is active, what some call righteous indignation and others natural wrath is roused inthree ways - against the demons, against our nature and against our own soul; for such indignation or wrath impelsus to sharpen our conscience like a keen-bladed sword against our enemies. If this righteous indignation triumphsand subjects sin and our

unregenerate self to the soul, then it is transmuted into the loftiest courage and leads us toGod. But if the soul enslaves itself to sin and our unregenerate self, then this righteous indignation turns against itand torments it mercilessly, for it has enslaved itself to its enemies by its own free will. Thus enslaved, the soulcommits terrible crimes, for its state of virtue is lost and it has alienated itself from God.

110. Of all the passions, lechery and listlessness are especially harsh and burdensome, for they oppress anddebilitate the unhappy soul. And as they are inter-related and intertwined they are difficult to fight against and toovercome - in fact by our own efforts alone we cannot

defeat them. Lechery burgeons in the soul's appetitive aspect and by nature embraces indiscriminately both souland body, since the total pleasure it generates spreads through all our members. Listlessness, once it has laid hold ofour intellect and like bindweed has enlaced our soul and body, makes us slothful, enfeebled and indolent. Evenbefore we have attained the blessed state of dispassion these two passions are expelled, though not finally defeated,whenever through prayer our soul receives from the Holy Spirit a power that releases it from tension, producingstrength and profound peace in the heart, and solacing us with stillness. Lechery is the pleasure that includes allother forms of sensual indulgence, their source, mistress and queen; and its crony, sloth, is the invincible chariotbearing Pharaoh's captains (cf. Exod. 14:7). Through these two - lechery and sloth - the seeds of the passions aresown in our unhappy lives.

111. Noetic prayer is an activity initiated by the cleansing power of the Spirit and the mystical rites celebrated bythe intellect. Similarly, stillness is initiated by attentive waiting upon God, its intermediate stage is characterized byilluminative power and contemplation, and its final goal is ecstasy and the enraptured flight of the intellect towardsGod.

112. Prior to the enjoyment of the blessings that transcend the intellect, and as a

foretaste of that enjoyment, thenoetic activity of the intellect mystically offers up the Lamb of God upon the altar of the soul and partakes of Him incommunion. To eat the Lamb of God upon the soul's noetic altar is not simply to apprehend Him spiritually or toparticipate in Him; it is also to become an image of the Lamb as He is in the age to come. Now we experience themanifest expression of the mysteries; hereafter we hope to enjoy their very substance.

113. For beginners prayer is like a joyous fire kindled in the heart; for the perfect it is like a vigorous sweet-scented light. Or again, prayer is the preaching of the Apostles, an action of faith or, rather, faith itself, 'that makes

real for us the things for which we hope' (Heb. 11:1), active love, angelic impulse, the power of the bodiless spirits,their work and delight, the Gospel of God, the heart's assurance, hope of salvation, a sign of purity, a token ofholiness, knowledge of God, baptism made manifest, purification in the water of regeneration, a pledge of the HolySpirit, the exultation of Jesus, the soul's delight, God's mercy, a sign of reconciliation, the seal of Christ, a ray of thenoetic sun, the heart's dawn-star, the confirmation of the Christian

faith, the disclosure of reconciliation with God, God's grace, God's wisdom or, rather, the origin of true andabsolute Wisdom; the revelation of God, the work of monks, the life of hesychasts, the source of stillness, andexpression of the angelic state. Why say more? Prayer is God, who accomplishes everything in everyone (cf 1 Cor.12:6), for there is a single action of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, activating all things through Christ Jesus.

114. Had Moses not received the rod of power from God, he would not have become a god to Pharaoh (cf. Exod.7:1) and a scourge both to him and to Egypt. Correspondingly the intellect, if it fails to grasp the power of prayer,will not be able to shatter sin and the hostile forces ranged against it.

115. Those who say or do anything without humility are like people who build in winter or without bricks andmortar. Very few acquire humility and know it through experience; and those who try to talk about it are like peoplemeasuring a

bottomless pit. And I who in my blindness have formed a faint image of this great light am rash enoughto say this about it: tme humility does not consist in speaking humbly, or in looking humble. The humble persondoes not have to force himself to think humbly, nor does he keep finding fault with himself. Such conduct mayprovide us with an occasion for humility or constitute its outward form, but humility itself is a grace and a divinegift. The holy fathers teach that there are two kinds of humility: to regard oneself as lower than everyone else, and toascribe all one's achievement to God. The first is the beginning, the second the consummation.

Those who seek humility should bear in mind the three following things: that they are the worst of sinners, thatthey are the most despicable of all creatures since their state is an unnatural one, and that they are even more pitiablethan the demons, since they are slaves to the demons. You will also profit if you say this to yourself: how do I knowwhat or how many other people's sins are, or whether they are greater than or equal to my own? In our ignoranceyou and I, my soul, are worse than all men, we are dust and ashes under their feet. How can I not regard myself asmore despicable than all other creatures, for they act in accordance with the nature they have been given, while I,owing to my innumerable sins, am in a state contrary to nature. Truly animals are more pure than I, sinner that I am;on account of this I am the lowest of all, since even before my death I have made my bed in

hell. Who is not fully aware that the person who sins is worse than the demons, since he is their thrall and theirslave, even in this life sharing their murk-mantled prison? If I am mastered by the demons I must be inferior to them.Therefore my lot will be with them in the abyss of hell, pitiful that I am. You on earth who even before your deathdwell in that abyss, how do you dare delude yourself, calling yourself righteous, when through the evil you havedone you have defiled yourself and made yourself a sinner and a demon? Woe to your self-deception and yourdelusion, squalid cur that you are, consigned to fire and darkness for

these offences.

116. According to theologians, noetic, pure, angelic prayer is in its power wisdom inspired by the Holy Spirit. Asign that you have attained such prayer is that the intellect's vision when praying is completely free from form andthat the intellect sees neither itself nor anything else in a material way. On the contrary, it is often drawn away evenfrom its own senses by the light acting within it; for it now grows immaterial and filled with spiritual radiance,becoming through ineffable union a single spirit with God (cf. 1 Cor. 6:17).

117. We are led and guided towards God-given humility by seven different qualities, each of which generates andcomplements the others: silence, humbleness in thought, in speech, in appearance, self-reproach, contrition andlooking on oneself as the least of men. Silence consciously espoused gives birth to humbleness in thought. Humble-ness in thought produces three further modes of humility, namely, humbleness in speech, bearing oneself in a simpleand humble way, and constant self-belittlement. These three modes give birth to contrition; this arises within uswhen God allows us to suffer temptations - when, that is, we are disciplined by providence and humbled by thedemons. Contrition readily induces the soul to feel the lowest and least of all, and the servant of all. Contrition andlooking on oneself as the least of all bring about the perfect humility that is the gift of God, a power rightly regardedas the perfection of all the virtues. It is a state in which one ascribes all one's achievements to God. Thus the firstfactor leading to humility is silence, from which humbleness of thought is bom. This gives birth to the three furthermodes of humility. These three generate the single quality of contrition. The quality of contrition gives birth to theseventh mode, the primal humility of regarding oneself as the least of men, which is also' called providentialhumility. Providential humility confers the true and God-given humility that is

perfect and indescribable. Primal humility comes thus: when you are abandoned, overcome, enslaved anddominated by every passion, distractive thought and evil spirit, and can find no help in doing good works, or in God,or in anything at all,

so that you are ready to fall into despair, then you are humbled in everything, are filled withcontrition and regard yourself as the lowest and least of all things, the slave of all, and worse even than the demons,since you are dominated and vanquished by them. This is providential humility. Once acquired, through it Godbestows the ultimate humility. This is a divine power that activates and accomplishes all things. With its aid a man

always sees himself as an instrument of divine power, and through it he accomplishes the miraculous works of God.

118. Because we are now mastered by the passions and succumb to a host of temptations we cannot in our ageattain those states that characterize sanctity -1 mean real spiritual contemplation of the divine light, an intellect freefrom fantasy and distraction, the true energy of prayer ceaselessly flowing from the depths of the heart, the soul'sresurrection and ascension, divine rapture, the soaring beyond the limits of this world, the mind's ecstasy in spiritabove all things sensory, the ravishment of the intellect above even its own powers, the angelic flight of the soulimpelled by God towards what is infinite and utterly sublime. The intellect - especially in the more superficialamong us - tends to picture these states prematurely to itself, and in this way it loses even the slight stability God hasgiven it and becomes altogether moribund. Hence we must exercise great discrimination and not try to pre-emptthings that come in their own good time, or reject what we already possess and dream of something else. For bynature the intellect readily invents fantasies and illusions about the high spiritual states it has not yet attained, andthus there is no small danger that we may lose what has already been given to us and destroy our mind throughrepeated self-deception, becoming a day-dreamer and not a hesychast.

119. Faith, like active prayer, is a grace. For prayer, when activated by love through the power of the Spirit,renders true faith manifest - the faith that reveals the life of Jesus. If, then, you are aware that such faith is not atwork within you, that means your faith is dead and lifeless. In fact you should not even speak of yourself as one ofthe 'faithful' if your faith is merely theoretical and is not actualized by the practice of the commandments or by theSpirit. Thus faith must be

evidenced by progress in keeping the commandments, or it must be actualized and translucent in what we do.This is confirmed by St James when he says, 'Show me your faith through your works and I will show you the worksthat I do through my faith' (cf Jas. 2:18). In saying this he makes it clear that grace-inspired faith is evidenced bythe keeping of the commandments, just as the commandments are actualized and made translucent by grace-inspiredfaith. Faith is the root of the commandments or, rather, it is the spring that feeds their growth. It has two aspects -that of confession and that of grace - though it is essentially one and indivisible.

120. The short ladder of spiritual progress - which is at the same time both small and great - has five rangs leadingto perfection. The first is renunciation, the second submission to a religious way of life, the third obedience tospiritual direction, the fourth humility, and the fifth God-imbued love. Renunciation raises the prisoner from hell andsets him free from enslavement to material things. Submission is the discovery of Christ and the decision to serveHim. As Christ Himself said, 'He who serves Me, follows Me; and where I am he who serves Me will also be' (cf.John 12:26). And where is Christ? In heaven, enthroned at the right hand of the Father. Thus he who serves Christmust be in heaven as well, his foot placed ready to climb up; indeed, before he even begins to ascend by his ownefforts he is already raised up and ascending with Christ. Obedience, put into action through the practice of thecommandments, builds a ladder out of various virtues and places them in the soul as rungs by which to ascend (cf.

Ps. 84:5. LXX). Thence the spiritual aspirant is embraced by humihty, the great exaher, and is borne heavenwardsand dehvered over to love, the queen of the virtues. By love he is led to Christ and brought into His presence. Thusby this short ladder he who is truly obedient swiftly ascends to heaven.

121. The quickest way to ascend to the kingdom of heaven by the short ladder of the virtues is through effacingthe five passions hostile to obedience, namely, disobedience, contentiousness, self-gratification, self-justificationand pernicious self-conceit. For these are the limbs and organs of the recalcitrant demon that devours those whooffer false obedience and consigns them to the dragon of the abyss. Disobedience is the mouth of hell;contentiousness its tongue, whetted like

a sword; self-gratification its sharp teeth; self-justification its gullet; andself-conceit, that sends one to hell, is the vent that evacuates its

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all-devouring belly. If through obedience you overcome the first of these - disobedience - you cut off all the restat a stroke, and with a single swift stride attain heaven. This is the truly ineffable and inconceivable miracle wroughtby our compassionate Lord: that through a single virtue or, rather, a single commandment, we can ascendstraightway to heaven, just as through a single act of disobedience we have descended and continue to descend intohell.

122. Man is like another or second world - a new world, as he is called by St Paul when he states, 'Whoever is inChrist is a new creation' (2 Cor. 5:17). For through virtue man becomes a heaven and an earth and everything that aworld is. Every quality and mystery exists for man's sake, as St Gregory of Nazianzos says. Moreover, if, as St Paulaffirms, our struggle is not against creatures of flesh and blood, but against the potentates and rulers of the darknessof this world, against the spirits of evil in the celestial realms of the prince of the air (cf. Eph. 2:2; 6:12), it followsthat those who secretly fight against us inhabit the world of our psychic powers, which is like another great world ofnature. For the three princes that oppose us in our struggle attack the three powers of the soul; and it is preciselywhere we have made progress, and in areas that we have labored to develop, that they launch their assault.

Thus the dragon, the prince of the abyss, whose strength is manifest in the loins and the belly - organs of oursoul's appetitive power - sallies forth against those who strive to keep their attention in their hearts; and through thelust-loving giant of forgetfulness he hurls at them the whole battery of his fiery darts (cf. Eph. 6:16). Desire beingfor him like another sea and abyss, he plunges into it, coils his way through it, and stirs it up, making it foam andboil. In this way he inflames it with sexual longing and inundates it with sensual pleasure; but this does not slake it,for it is insatiable.

The prince of this world (cf. John 12:31), who campaigns against the soul's

incensive power, attacks those strivingto attain practical virtue. With the help of the giant of sloth, he continually ranges his forces against us and engagesus in a spiritual contest with every trick of passion he can devise. As though in the theatre or stadium of some otherworld, he wrestles with all who stand up against him with

courage and endurance; sometimes he wins, sometimes he is defeated, and so he either disgraces us or gains uscrowns of glory in the sight of the angels.

The prince of the air (cf. Eph. 2:2) attacks those whose minds are absorbed in contemplation, deluding them withfantasies; for supported by the evil spirits of the air he attacks the soul's intellectual and spiritual power. Through thegiant of ignorance he clouds the aspiring mind as though it were an intellectual heaven, disrupting its composure,craftily insinuating into it vague fantastic images of evil spirits and their metamorphoses, and producing fear-inspiring similitudes of thunder and lightning, tempests and alarums. These three princes, assisted by the threegiants, attack the three powers of our soul, each waging war against the particular power that corresponds to him.

123. These demons were once celestial intelligences; but, having fallen from their original state of immaterialityand refinement, each of them has acquired a certain material grossness, assuming a bodily form corresponding to thekind of action allotted to it. For like human beings they have lost the delights of the angels and have been deprivedof divine bliss, and so they too, like us, now find pleasure in earthly things, becoming to a certain extent materialbecause of the disposition to material passions which they have acquired. We should not be surprised at this, for ourown soul, created intellectual and spiritual in the image of God, has become bestial, insensate and virtually mindlessthrough losing the knowledge of God and finding pleasure in material things. Inner disposition changes outwardnature, and acts of moral choice alter the way that nature functions. Some evil spirits are material, gross,uncontrollable, passionate and vindictive. They hunger for material pleasure and indulgence as carnivores for flesh.Like savage dogs and like those possessed they devour and relish rotten

food; and their delight and habitation arecoarse, fleshy bodies. Others are licentious and slimy. They creep about in the pool of desire like leeches, frogs andsnakes. Sometimes they assume the form of fish, delighting in their brackish lubricity. Slippery and flaccid, theyswim in the sea of drunkenness, rejoicing in the humectation of mindless pleasures. In this manner they constantlystir up waves of impure thoughts, and storms and tempests in the soul. Others are light and subtle, since they areaerial spirits, and agitate the soul's contemplative power, provoking strong winds and fantasies. They deceive thesoul by

appearing sometimes in the form of birds or angels. They fill one's memory with the forms of people one knows.

They pervert and deform the contemplative vision of those pursuing the path of hohness who have not yet attainedthe state of purity and inner discrimination; for there is nothing spiritual but that they can secretly transformthemselves into it in the imagination. They too arm themselves according to our spiritual state and degree ofprogress, and substituting illusion for truth and fantasy for contemplation they take up their abode within us. It is tothese evil spirits that Scripture refers when it speaks of beasts of the field, birds of the air and things that creep onthe ground (cf. Hos. 2:18).

124. There are five ways in which the passions may be aroused in us and our fallen self may wage war against oursoul. Sometimes our fallen self misuses things. Sometimes it seeks to do what is unnatural as though it were natural.Sometimes it forms warm friendship with the demons and they provide it with arms against the soul. Sometimesunder the influence of the passions it falls into a state of civil war, divided against itself. Finally, if the demons havefailed to achieve their purpose in any of the ways just mentioned. God may permit them in their malice to wage waragainst us in order to teach us greater humility.

125. The main causes of warfare - arising in us through every kind of object or situation - are three: our innerdisposition, the misuse of created things and, by God's leave, the malice and onslaught of the demons. As the fallenself rises in

protest against the soul, and the soul against the fallen self (cf Gal. 5:17), so in the same way our innerdisposition and our mode of acting make the passions of the fallen self war against the soul, and the valiant powersof the soul wage war against the fallen self. And sometimes our enemy, shameless as he is, has the audacity to fightagainst us in his own person, without cause or warning. Thus, my friend, do not let this blood-loving leech bleedyour arteries, and then spit out the blood he has sucked from you. Do not glut the snake and the dragon, and thenyou will easily trample on the insolence of the lion and the dragon (cf Ps. 91:13). Lament until you have strippedoff the passions and clothed yourself in your heavenly dwelling-place (cf. 2 Cor. 5:2), and are refashioned accordingto the likeness of Jesus Christ, who made you in His image (cf. Col. 3:10).

126. Those completely given over to the pursuits of the flesh and[V4] 245

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full of self-love are always slaves to sensual pleasure and to vanity. Envy, too, is rooted in them. Consumed bymalice and embittered by their neighbor's blessings, they calumniate good as bad, calling it the fruit of deceit. Theydo not accept things of the Spirit or believe in them; and because of their lack of faith they cannot see or know God.Such people, due to this same blindness and lack of faith, on the last day will justly hear spoken to them the words, Tknow you not' (Matt. 25:12). For the questing believer must either believe when he hears what he does not know, orcome to know what he believes; and he must teach to others what he has come to know and abundantly multiply thetalent entrusted to him. But if he disbelieves what he does not know, and vilifies what he does not understand, andteaches what he has not learnt, envying those who teach things from practical experience, his lot will surely be tosuffer punishment with those consumed by 'the gall of bitterness' (Acts 8:23).

127. According to the wise, a true teacher is he who through his all-embracing cognitive insight comprehends

created things concisely, as if they constituted a single body, establishing distinctions and connections between themaccording to their generic difference and identity, so as to indicate which possess similar qualities. Or he may bedescribed as one who can truly demonstrate things apodictically. Or again, a

true spiritual teacher is he whodistinguishes and relates the general and universal qualities of created things - classified as five in number, butcompounded in the incarnate Logos - in accordance with a particular formulation that embraces everything. But hisapodictic skill is not a matter of mere verbal dexterity, like that of profane philosophers, for he is able to enlightenothers through the contemplative vision of created things manifested to him by the Holy Spirit.

A true philosopher is one who perceives in created things their spiritual Cause, or who knows created thingsthrough knowing their Cause, having attained a union with God that transcends the intellect and a direct, unmediatedfaith: He does not simply learn about divine things, but actually experiences them. Or again, a true philosopher isone whose intellect is conversant equally with ascetic practice and contemplative wisdom. Thus the perfectphilosopher or lover of wisdom is one whose intellect has attained - alike on the moral, natural and theologicallevels - love of wisdom or, rather, love of God. That is to say, he has learnt from God the principles of asceticpractice (moral philosophy), an insight into the spiritual causes of created things

(natural philosophy), and a precise contemplative understanding of doctrinal principles (theology).

Or again, a teacher initiated into things divine is one who distinguishes principial beings from participative beingsor beings that have no autonomous self-subsistent reality; he adduces the essences of principial beings from beingsthat exist through participating in them, and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, he perceives the essences of principialbeings embodied in participative beings. In other words, he interprets what is intelligible and invisible in terms ofwhat is sensible and visible, and the visible sense-world in terms of the invisible and supersensory world, consciousthat what is visible is an image of what is invisible, and that what is invisible is the archetype of what is visible. Heknows that things possessing form and figure are brought into being by what is formless and without figure, and thateach manifests the other spiritually; and he clearly perceives each in the other and conveys this perception in histeaching of the

truth. His knowledge of the truth, with all its sun-like radiance, is not expressed in anagogical orallegorical form; on the contrary, he elucidates the true underlying principles of both worlds with spiritual insightand power, and expounds them forcibly and vividly. In this way the visible world becomes our teacher and theinvisible world is shown to be an eternal divine dwelling-place manifestly brought into being for our sake.

A divine philosopher is he who through ascetic purification and noetic contemplation has achieved a direct unionwith God, and is a true friend of God, in that he esteems and loves the supreme, creative and true wisdom aboveevery other love, wisdom and knowledge. A student of spiritual knowledge, though not properly speaking aphilosopher (even though reflected wisdom has unnoticed appropriated the name of philosophy, as St Gregory ofNazianzos points out) is he who esteems and studies God's wisdom mirrored in His creation, down to the leastvestige of it; but he does this without any self-display or any hankering after human praise and glory, for he wishes

to be a lover of God's wisdom in creation and not a lover of materialism.

An interpreter of sacred texts adept in the mysteries of the kingdom of God is everyone who after practicing theascetic life devotes himself to the contemplation of God and cleaves to stillness. Out of the treasury of his heart hebrings forth things new and old (cf. Matt. 13:52), that is, things from the Gospel of Christ and the Prophets, or fromthe New and Old Testaments, or doctrinal teachings and rules of

ascetic practice, or themes from the Apostles and from the Law. These are the mysteries new and old that theskilled interpreter brings forth when he has been schooled in the life of holiness.

An interpreter is one proficient in the practice of the ascetic life and still actively engaged in scriptural exegesis.A divine teacher is one who mediates, in accordance with the laws governing the natural world, the spiritualknowledge and inner meanings of created things and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, elucidates

all things with theanalytic power of his intelligence. A true philosopher is one who has attained, consciously and directly, asupernatural union with God.

128. Those who write and speak and who wish to build up the Church, while lacking the inspiration of the HolySpirit, are 'psychic' or worldly people void of the Spirit, as St Jude observes (cf. Jude 19). Such people come underthe curse which says, 'Woe to those who are wise in their own sight, and esteem themselves as possessors ofknowledge' (Isa. 5:21); for they speak from themselves and it is not the Spirit of God that speaks in them (cf Matt.10:20). For those who speak what are simply their own thoughts before they have attained purity are deluded by thespirit of self-conceit. It is to them that Solomon refers when he says, 'I knew a man who regarded himself as wise;there is more hope for a fool than for him' (Prov. 26:12. LXX); and again, 'Do not be wise in your own sight' (Prov.3:7). St Paul himself, filled with the Spirit, endorses this when he says, 'We are not qualified to form any judgmenton our own account; our qualification comes from God' (2 Cor. 3:5), and, 'As men sent from God, we speak beforeGod in the grace of Christ' (2 Cor. 2:17). What people say when they speak on their own account is repellent andmurksome, for their words do not come from the living spring of the Spirit, but are spawned from the morass of theirown heart, a bog infested with the leeches, snakes and frogs of desire, delusion and dissipation; the water of theirknowledge is evil-smelling, turbid and torpid, sickening to those who drink it and filling them with nausea anddisgust.

129. 'We are the body of Christ', says St Paul, 'and each of us is one of its members' (cf. 1 Cor. 12:27). Andelsewhere he says, 'You are one body and one spirit, even as you have been called' (Eph. 4:4). For 'as the bodywithout the spirit is dead' (Jas. 2:26) and insensate, so if you have been deadened by the passions through neglectingthe commandments after your baptism the Holy Spirit and the grace of

Christ cease to operate in you and to enlighten you; for though you possess the Spirit, since you have faith andhave been regenerated through baptism, yet the Spirit is quiescent and inactive within you because of the deadnessof your soul.

Although the soul is one and the members of the body are many, the soul sustains them all, giving life andmovement to those that can be animated. Should some of them have withered because of some disease and becomeas if dead and inert, yet they are still sustained by the soul, even in their lifeless and insensate state. Similarly, theSpirit of Christ is present with integral wholeness in all who are members of Christ, activating and generating life inall capable of participating in it; and in His compassion He still sustains even those who through some weakness donot actively participate in the life of the Spirit. In this way each of the faithful participates, by virtue of his faith, inadoption to sonship through the Spirit; but should he grow negligent and fail to sustain his faith he will become inertand benighted, deprived of Christ's life and light. Such is the state of each of the faithful who, though a member ofChrist and possessing the Spirit of Christ, fails to activate this Spirit within himself and so is stagnant, incapable ofparticipating positively in the life of grace.

130. The principal forms of contemplation are eight in number. The first is contemplation of the formless,unongmate and uncreated God, source of all things - that is, contemplation of the one Triadic Deity that transcendsall being. The second is contemplation of the hierarchy and order of the spiritual powers. The third is contemplationof the structure of created beings. The fourth is contemplation of God's descent through the incarnation of the Logos.The fifth is contemplation of the universal resurrection. The sixth is contemplation of the dread second coming ofChrist. The seventh is contemplation of age-long punishment. The eighth is contemplation of the kingdom ofheaven. The first four pertain to what has already been manifested and realized. The second four pertain to what is instore and has not yet been manifested; but they are clearly contemplated by and disclosed to those who throughgrace have attained great purity of intellect. Whoever without such grace attempts to descry them should realize thatfar from attaining spiritual vision he will merely become the prey of fantasies, deceived by and forming illusions inobedience to the spirit of delusion.

131. Here something must be said about delusion, so far as this is[V4] 249

possible; for, because of its deviousness and the number of ways in which it can ensnare us, few recognize itclearly and for most it is almost inscrutable.

Delusion manifests itself or, rather, attacks and invades us in two ways -

in the form of mental images and fantasies or in the form of diabohc influence - though its sole cause and origin isalways arrogance. The first form is the origin of the second and the second is the origin of a third form - mentalderangement. The first form, illusory visions, is caused by self-conceit; for this leads us to invest the divine withsome illusory shape, thus deceiving us through mental images and fantasies. This deception in its turn producesblasphemy as well as the fear induced by monstrous apparitions, occurring both when awake and when asleep - astate described as the terror and perturbation of the soul. Thus arrogance is followed by delusion, delusion byblasphemy, blasphemy by fear, fear by terror, and terror by a derangement of the natural state of the mind. This isthe first form of delusion, that induced by mental images and fantasies.

The second form, induced by diabolic influence, is as follows. It has its origin in self-indulgence, which in its turnresults from so-called natural desire. Self-indulgence begets licentiousness in all its forms of indescribable impurity.By inflaming man's whole nature and clouding his intelligence as a result of its intercourse with spurious images,licentiousness deranges the intellect, searing it into a state of delirium and impelling its victim to utter falseprophecies, interpreting the visions and discourses of certain supposed saints, which he claims arc revealed to himwhen he is intoxicated and befuddled with passion, his whole character perverted and corrupted by demons. Thoseignorant of spiritual matters, beguiled by delusion, call such men 'little souls'. These 'little souls' are to be foundsitting near the shrines of saints, by whose spirit they claim to be inspired and tested, and whose purported messagethey proclaim to others. But in truth they should be called possessed by the demons, deceived and enslaved bydelusion, and not prophets foretelling what is to happen now and in the future. For the demon of licentiousnesshimself darkens and deranges their minds, inflaming them with the fire of spiritual lust, conjuring up before themthe illusory appearance of saints, and making them hear conversations and see visions. Sometimes the demonsthemselves appear to them and convulse them with fear. For having harnessed them to the yoke of Belial, the demonof licentiousness drives them on

to practice their deceits, so that he may keep them captive and enslaved until death, when he will consign them tohell.

132. Delusion arises in us from three principal sources: arrogance, the envy of demons, and the divine will thatallows us to be tried and corrected. Arrogance arises from superficiality, demonic envy is provoked by our spiritualprogress, and the need for correction is the consequence of our sinful way of life. The delusion arising solely fromenvy and self-conceit is swiftly healed, especially when we humble ourselves. On the other hand, the delusionallowed by God for our correction, when we are handed over to Satan because of our smfulness, God often permitsto continue until our death, if this is needed to efface our sins. Sometimes God hands over even the guiltless to thetorment of demons for the sake of their salvation. One should also know that the demon of self-conceit himselfprophesies in those who are not scrupulously attentive to their hearts.

133. All the faithful are truly anointed priests and kings in the spiritual renewal brought about through baptism.

just as priests and kings were anointed figuratively in former times. For those anointings were prefigurations of thetruth of our anointing: prefigurations in relation not merely to some of us but to all of us. For our kingship andpriesthood is not of the same form or character as theirs, even though the symbolic actions are the same. Nor doesour anointing recognize any distinction in nature, grace or calling, in such a way that those anointed essentiallydiffer one from the other: we have but one and the same calling, faith and ritual. The true significance of this is thathe who is anointed is pure, dispassionate and wholly consecrated to God now and for ever.

134. If your speech is full of wisdom and you meditate on understanding in your heart (cf Ps. 49:3), you willdisclose in created things the presence of the divine Logos, the substantive Wisdom of God the Father (cf. 1 Cor.1:24); for in created things you will perceive the outward expression of the archetypes that characterize them, andthus through your active living intelligence you will speak wisdom that derives from the divine Wisdom. Andbecause your heart will be illuminated by the power of the transfiguring understanding on which you meditate inyour spirit, you will be able through this understanding to instruct and illuminate those who listen with faith.

135. Today's great enemy of truth, drawing men to perdition, is[V4]251

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delusion. As a result of this delusion, tenebrous ignorance rules the souls of all those sunk in lethargy andalienates them from God. Such people are as if unaware that there exists a God who gives us rebirth andillumination, or they assume that we can believe in Him and know Him only in a theoretical way and not throughour actions, or else they imagine that He has revealed Himself only to the people of former times and not to us also;and they pretend that the scriptural texts about God are applicable only to the original authors, or to others, but not tothemselves. Thus they blaspheme the teaching about God, since they repudiate true knowledge inspired by devotionto God, and read the Scriptures only in a literal, not to say Judaic, manner; denying the possibility that man even inthis life can be resurrected through the resurrection of his soul, they choose to remain in the grave of ignorance.Delusion consists of three passions: lack of faith, guile and sloth. These generate and support each other: lack offaith sharpens the wits of guile, and guile goes hand in hand with sloth, which expresses itself outwardly in laziness.Or conversely, sloth may beget guile - did not the Lord say, 'You cunning and lazy servant' (Matt. 25:26)? - andguile mothers lack of faith. For if you are full of guile you lack faith, and if you lack faith you stand in no awe ofGod. From such lack of faith comes sloth, which begets contempt; and when you are full of contempt you scorn allgoodness and practice every kind of wickedness.

136. Complete dogmatic orthodoxy consists in a true doctrine about God and an unerring spiritual knowledge ofcreated things. If you are orthodox in this way you should glorify God thus: Glory to Thee, Christ our God, glory toThee, because for our sake Thou, the divine Logos who transcends all things, becamest man. Great is the mysteryof Thine incarnation. Savior: glory to Thee.

137. According to St Maximos the Confessor there are three motives for writing which are above reproach andcensure: to assist one's memory, to help others, or as an act of obedience. It is for the last reason that most spiritual

writings have been composed, at the humble request of those who have need of them. If you write about spiritualmatters simply for pleasure, fame or self-

display, you will get your deserts, as Scripture says (cf Matt. 6:5, 16), andwill not profit

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from it in this life or gain any reward in the life to come. On the contrary, you will be condemned for courtingpopularity and for fraudulently trafficking in God's wisdom.

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1. Everyone baptized into Christ should pass progressively through all the stages of Christ's own life, for inbaptism he receives the power so to progress, and through the commandments he can discover and leam how toaccomplish such progression. To Christ's conception corresponds the foretaste of the gift of the Holy Spirit, to Hisnativity the actual experience of joyousness, to His baptism the cleansing force of the fire of the Spirit, to Histransfiguration the contemplation of divine light, to His crucifixion the dying to all things, to His burial theindwelling of divine love in the heart, to His resurrection the soul's life-quickening resurrection, and to Hisascension divine ecstasy and I the transport of the intellect into God. He who fails to pass consciously through thesestages is still callow in body and spirit, even though he may be regarded by all as mature and accomplished in thepractice of virtue.

2. Christ's Passion is a life-quickening death to those who have experienced all its phases, for by experiencingwhat He experienced we are glorified as He is (cf Rom. 8:17). But indulgence in sensual passions induces a trulylethal death. Willingly to experience what Christ experienced is to crucify cracifixion and to put death to death.

3. To suffer for Christ's sake is patiently to endure whatever happens to us. For the envy which the innocentprovoke is for their benefit, while the Lord's schooling tests us so as to bring about our conversion, since it opensour ears when we are guilty. That is why the Lord has promised an eternal crown to those

who endure in this manner(cf. Jas. 1:12). Glory to Thee, our God; glory to Thee, Holy Trinity; glory to Thee for all things.

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On Passion-Imbued Change

4. Listlessness - a most difficult passion to overcome - makes the body sluggish. And when the body is sluggish,the soul also grows sluggish. When both have become thoroughly lax, self-indulgence induces a change in thebody's temperament. Self-indulgence incites the appetite, appetite gives rise to pernicious desire, desire to the spiritof revolt, revolt to dormant recollections, recollection to imaginings, imagining to mental provocation, provocationto coupling with the thought provoked, and coupling to assent. Such assent to a diabolic provocation leads to actualsinning, either through the body or in various other ways. Thus we are defeated and thus we lapse.

On Beneficent Change

5. In whatever work we engage patience gives birth to courage, courage to commitment, commitment toperseverance, and perseverance to an increase in the work done. Such additional labor quells the body's dissoluteimpulses and checks the desire for sensual indulgence. Thus checked, desire gives rise to spiritual longing, longingto love, love to aspiration, aspiration to ardor, ardor to self-galvanizing, self-galvanizing to assiduousness,assiduousness to prayer, and prayer to stillness. Stillness gives birth to contemplation, contemplation to spiritualknowledge, and knowledge to the apprehension of the mysteries. The consummation of the mysteries is theology,the fruit of theology is perfect love, of love humility, of humility dispassion, and of dispassion foresight, prophecyand foreknowledge. No one possesses the virtues perfectly in this life, nor does he cut off evil all at once. On thecontrary, by small increases of virtue evil gradually ceases to exist.

On Morbid Defluxions

Question: In how many ways do morbid defluxions take place, whether sinful or sinless?[V4] 255

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6. Answer: Sinful defluxions take place in three ways: through fornication, through self-abuse, and throughconsent to pernicious thoughts. Sinless defluxions take place in seven ways: through the urine, through eating solidor stimulating foods, through drinking too much chill water, through the sluggishness of the body, through excessivetiredness, and through all kinds of demonic fantasy. In veterans in the ascetic life they generally take place throughthe first five of the ways we have just mentioned. In those who have attained the state of dispassion, the fluid onlyissues mixed with urine, because on account of their ascetic labors their inner ducts have in some way becomeporous and they have been given the grace of a divine energy, purificatory and sanctifying - the grace of continence.The last form of defluxion - that prompted by demonic fantasy during sleep - pertains both to those still under thedomination of the passions and to those suffering from weakness. But since this is involuntary it is free from sin, asthe holy fathers tell us.

By divine dispensation the person who has attained the state of dispassion experiences from time to time a sinlesspropulsion, while the remaining fluid is consumed by divine fire. The person still engaged in the ascetic life and sounder various forms of constraint experiences a discharge that is innocuous. The person still under the sway of thepassions experiences a natural discharge and an unnatural discharge, the first prompted by diabolic fantasy duringsleep and the second by diabolic fantasy to which assent has been given while he is awake. The first is innocuous,the second is sinful and liable to penance.

In those who have attained the state of dispassion the propulsion and the bodily discharge constitute a singleaction through which by divine dispensation surplus fluid is expelled through the urine while the rest is consumedby divine fire, as already stated. In those midway along the ascetic path there are said to be six general ways ofinnocuous defluxion through which the body is cleansed and freed from the corruptive fluid formed naturally andunavoidably in it. These are prompted by solid or stimulating foods, by drinking cold water, by sluggishness of thebody, by torpor resulting from excessive labor, and finally by the malice of demons. In the weak and those newlyengaged in the ascetic life there are similarly six ways, all embroiled with the passions. They are prompted bygluttony, by back-biting, by censoriousness, by self-esteem, by demonic

fantasy during sleep and

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assent to it while awake, and finally by the aggressive malice of demons. Yet even these have in God's providencea double purpose: first, they cleanse human nature from corruption, from the surplus matter it has absorbed, andfrom impulse-driven appetites; and, second, they train the person engaged in the spiritual struggle to be humble andattentive, and to restrain himself in all things and from all things.

7. He who dwells in solitude and depends on charity for his food must accept alms in seven ways. First, he mustask only for what is needful. Secondly, he must take only what is needful. Thirdly, he must receive whatever isoffered to him as if from God. Fourthly, he must trust in God and believe that He will recompense the giver. Fifthly,he must apply himself to keeping the commandments. Sixthly, he must not misuse what is given to him. Seventhly,he must not be stingy but must give to others and be compassionate. He who conducts himself thus in these mattersexperiences the joy of having his needs supplied not by man but by God.

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On the Signs of Grace and Delusion,Written for the Confessor Longinos: Ten Texts

1. As the great teacher St John Chrysostom states, we should be in a position to say that we need no help from theScriptures, no assistance from other people, but are instructed by God; for 'all will be taught by God' (Isa. 54:13;John 6:45), in such a way that we learn from Him and through Him what we ought to know. And this applies not

only to those of us who are monks but to each and every one of the faithful: we are all of us called to carry the lawof the Spirit written on the tablets of our

hearts (cf. 2 Cor. 3:3), and to attain like the Cherubim the supreme privilegeof conversing through pure prayer in the heart directly with Jesus. But because we are infants at the time of ourrenewal through baptism we do not understand the grace and the new life conferred upon us. Unaware of thesurpassing grandeur of the honor and glory in which we share, we fail to realize that we ought to grow in soul andspirit through the keeping of the commandments and so perceive noetically what we have received. On account ofthis most of us fall through indifference and servitude to the passions into a state of benighted obduracy. We do notknow whether God exists, or who we are, or what we have become, although through baptism we have been madesons of God, sons of light, and children and members of Christ. If we are baptized when grown up, we feel that wehave been baptized only in water and not by the Spirit. And even though we have been renewed in the Spirit, webelieve only in a formal, lifeless and ineffectual sense, and we say we are full of doubts.

Hence because we are in fact non-spiritual we live and behave in a non-spiritual manner. Should we repent, weunderstand and practice

the commandments only in a bodily way and not spiritually. And if after many labors a revelation of grace is inGod's compassion granted to us, we take it for a delusion. Or if we hear from others how grace acts, we arepersuaded by our envy to regard that also as a delusion. Thus we remain corpses until death, failing to live in Christand to be inspired by Him. According to Scripture, even that which we possess will be taken away from us at thetime of our death or our judgment because of our lack of faith and our despair (cf. Matt. 25:29). We do notunderstand that the children must be like the father, that is to say, we are to be made gods by God and spiritual bythe Holy Spirit; for 'that which is bom of the Spirit is spirit' (John 3:6). But we are unregenerate, even though wehave become members of the faith and heavenly, and so the Spirit of God does not dwell within us (cf Gen. 6:3).Because of this the Lord has handed us over to strange afflictions and captivity, and slaughter flourishes, perhapsbecause He wishes to correct evil, or cut it off, or heal it by more powerful remedies.

2. With the help of God, then, who inspires those who declare good tidings (cf. Ps. 68:11. LXX), we must firstexamine how one finds Christ or, rather, how one is found by Him, since we already possess and have received Himthrough baptism in the Spirit: as St Paul says, 'Do you not realize that Jesus Christ dwells within you?' (2 Cor. 13:5).Then we must ask how to advance or, simply, how to retain what we have discovered. The best and shortest courseis for us to give a brief summary of the whole spiritual journey from start to finish, long though it is. Many, indeed,have been so exhausted by their efforts to discover what they were looking for that, on finding the starting-point,they have remained content with this, and have not tried to advance farther. Encountering obstacles and turningaside unawares from the true path, they think that they are on the right track when actually they are veeringprofitlessly off course. Others, on reaching the halfway point of illumination, have then grown slack, wilting beforereaching the end; or they have reverted through their slipshod way of life, and have become beginners again. Yetothers, on the point of attaining perfection, have grown inattentive and self-conceited, relapsing to the state of thosein the middle way or even of beginners. Beginners, those in the middle way and the perfect have each their

distinctive characteristic: for the first it is activity, for the second illumination, for the third purification andresurrection of the soul.

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On How to DiscoverThe Energy of the Holy Spirit

3. The energy of the Holy Spirit, which we have already mystically received in baptism, is realized in two ways.First - to generalize - this gift is revealed, as St Mark tells us, through arduous and protracted practice of thecommandments: to the degree to which we effectively practice the commandments its radiance is increasinglymanifested in us. Secondly, it is manifested to those under spiritual guidance through the continuous invocation ofthe Lord Jesus, repeated with conscious awareness, that is, through mindfulness of God. In the first way, it isrevealed more slowly, in the second more rapidly, if one diligently and

persistently learns how to dig the ground andlocate the gold. Thus if we want to realize and know the truth and not to be led astray, let us seek to possess only theheart-engrafted energy in a way that is totally without shape or form, not trying to contemplate in our imaginationwhat we take to be the figure or similitude of things holy or to see any colors or lights. For in the nature of things thespirit of delusion deceives the intellect through such spurious fantasies, especially at the early stages, in those whoare still inexperienced. On the contrary, let our aim be to make the energy of prayer alone active in our hearts, for itbrings warmth and joy to the intellect, and sets the heart alight with an ineffable love for God and man. It is onaccount of this that humility and contrition flow richly from prayer. For prayer in beginners is the unceasing noeticactivity of the Holy Spirit. To start with it rises like a fire of joy from the heart; in the end it is like light madefragrant by divine energy.

4. There are several signs that the energy of the Holy Spirit is beginning to be active in those who genuinelyaspire for this to happen and are not just putting God to the test - for, according to the Wisdom of Solomon, Tt isfound by those who do not put it to the test, and manifests itself to those who do not distrust it' (cf. Wisd. 1:2). Insome it appears as awe arising in the heart, in others as a tremulous sense of jubilation, in others as joy, in others asjoy mingled with awe, or as tremulousness mingled with joy, and sometimes it manifests itself

as tears and awe. For the soul is joyous at God's visitation and mercy, but at the same time is in awe andtrepidation at His presence because it is guilty of so many sins. Again, in some the soul at the outset experiences anunutterable sense of contrition and an indescribable pain, like the woman in Scripture who labors to give birth (cf.Rev. 12:2). For the living and active Logos - that is to say, Jesus - penetrates, as the apostle says, to the point atwhich soul separates from body, joints from marrow (cf. Heb. 4:12), so as to expel by force every trace of passionfrom both soul and body. In others it is manifest as an unconquerable

love and peace, shown towards all, or as ajoyousness that the fathers have often called exultation - a spiritual force and an impulsion of the living heart that isalso described as a vibration and sighing of the Spirit who makes wordless intercession for us to God (cf. Rom.8:26). Isaiah has also called this the 'waves' of God's righteousness (cf. Isa. 48:18), while the great Ephrem calls it'spurring'. The Lord Himself describes it as 'a spring of water welling up for eternal life' (John 4:14) - He refers tothe Spirit as water - a source that leaps up in the heart and erupts through the ebullience of its power.

5. You should know that there are two kinds of exultation or joyousness: the calm variety (called a vibration orsighing or intercession of the Spirit), and the great exultation of the heart - a leap, bound or jump, the soaring flightof the living heart towards the sphere of the divine. For when the soul has been raised on the wings of divine love bythe Holy Spirit and has been freed from the bonds of the passions, it strives to fly to that higher realm even beforedeath, seeking to separate itself from its burden. This is also known as a stirring of the spirit - that is to say, aneruption or impulsion - as in the text, 'Jesus was stirred in spirit and, deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laidhim?"' (cf. John 11:34). David the Psalmist indicates the difference between the greater and the lesser exultationwhen he declares that the mountains leap like rams and the little hills like lambs (cf. Ps. 114: 6). He is referring ofcourse to those who are perfect and to beginners, for physical mountains and hills, lacking animal life, do notactually leap about.

6. Divine awe has nothing to do with trepidation - by which I mean, not the tremulousness induced by joy, but thetrepidation induced by wrath or chastisement or the feeling of desertion by God. On the contrary, divine awe isaccompanied by a tremulous sense of

jubilation arising from the prayer of fire that we offer when filled with awe. This awe is not the fear provoked bywrath or punishment, but it is inspired by

wisdom, and is also deserted as 'the beginning of wisdom' (Ps. 111:10).Awe may be divided into three kinds, even though the fathers speak only of two: the awe of beginners, that of theperfect, and that provoked by wrath, which should properly be called trepidation, agitation or contrition.

7. There are several kinds of trembling. That of wrath is one, that of joy is another, and that of the soul's incensivepower, when the heart's blood is over-heated, is another, that of old age is another, that of sin or delusion is another,and that of the curse which was laid on the human race because of Cain is another (cf. Gen. 4:11-15). In the early

stages of spiritual warfare, however, it sometimes but not always happens that the trembling induced by joy and thatinduced by sin contend with one another. The first is the tremulous sense of jubilation, when grace refreshes the soulwith great joyfulness accompanied by tears; the second is characterized by a disordered fervor, stupor and obduracythat consume the soul, inflame the sexual organs, and impel one to assent through the imagination to erotic physicalobscenities.

On the Different Kinds of Energy

8. In every beginner two forms of energy are at work, each affecting the heart in a distinct way. The first comesfrom grace, the second from delusion. St Mark the Ascetic corroborates this when he says that there is a spiritualenergy and a satanic energy, and that the beginner cannot distinguish between them. These energies in their turngenerate three kinds of fervor, the first prompted by grace, the second by delusion or sin, and the third by an excessof blood. This last relates to what St Thalassios the Libyan calls the body's temperament, the balance and concord ofwhich can be achieved by appropriate self-control.

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On Divine Energy

9. The energy of grace is the power of spiritual fire that fills the heart with joy

and gladness, stabilizes, warms andpurifies the soul, temporarily stills our provocative thoughts, and for a time suspends the body's impulsions. Thesigns and fruits that testify to its authenticity are tears, contrition, humility, self-control, silence, patience, self-effacement and similar qualities, all of which constitute undeniable evidence of its presence.

On Delusion

10. The energy of delusion is the passion for sin, inflaming the soul with thoughts of sensual pleasure andarousing phrenetic desire in the body for intercourse with other bodies. According to St Diadochos it is entirelyamorphous and disordered, inducing a mindless joy, presumption and confusion, accompanied by a mood of ill-defined sterile levity, and fomenting above all the soul's appetitive power with its sensuality. It nourishes itself onpleasure, aided and abetted by the insatiable belly; for through the belly it not only impregnates and enkindles ourwhole bodily temperament but also acts upon and inflames the soul, drawing it to itself so that little by little thedisposition to self-indulgence expels all grace from the person thus possessed.

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St Gregory of SinaiOn Stillness: Fifteen Texts

Two Ways of Prayer

There are two modes of union or, rather, two ways of entering into the noetic prayer that the Spirit activatesin the heart. For either the intellect, cleaving to the Lord (cf 1 Cor. 6:17), is present in the heart prior to theaction of the prayer; or the prayer itself, progressively quickened in the fire of spiritual joy, draws theintellect along with it or welds it to the invocation of the Lord Jesus and to union with Him. For since theSpirit works in each person as He wishes (cf. 1 Cor. 12:11), one of these two ways we have mentioned willtake precedence in some people, the other in others. Sometimes, as the passions subside through the ceaselessinvocation of Jesus Christ, a divine energy wells up in the heart, and a divine warmth is kindled; for Scripturesays that our God is a fire that consumes the passions (cf. Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29). At other times the Spiritdraws the intellect to Himself, confining it to the depths of the heart and restraining it from its usualdistractions. Then it will no longer be led captive from Jerusalem to the Assyrians, but a change for the betterbrings it back from Babylon to Zion, so that

it says with the Psalmist, Tt is right to praise Thee, 0 God, inZion, and to Thee shall our vows be rendered in Jerusalem' (Ps. 65:1. LXX), and 'When the Lord broughtback the prisoners to Zion' (Ps. 126:1), and 'Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad' (Ps. 53:6). The namesJacob and Israel refer respectively to the ascetically active and to the contemplative intellect which throughascetic labor and with God's help overcomes the passions and through contemplation sees God, so far as ispossible. Then the intellect, as if invited to a rich banquet and replete with divine joy, will sing, 'Thou hastprepared a table before me in the face of the demons and passions that afflict me' (cf. Ps. 23:5).

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2. 'In the morning sow your seed', says Solomon - and by 'seed' is to be understood the seed of prayer - 'and in theevening do not withhold your hand', so that there may be no break in the continuity of your prayer, no moment whenthrough lack of attention you cease to pray; 'for you do not know which will flourish, this or that' (Eccles. 11:6).Sitting from dawn on a seat about nine inches high, compel your intellect to descend from your head into your heart,and retain it there. Keeping your head forcibly bent downwards, and suffering acute pain in your chest, shouldersand neck, persevere in repeating noetically or in your soul 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy'. Then, since that maybecome constrictive and wearisome, and even galling because of the constant repetition - though this is not becauseyou are constantly eating the one food of the threefold name, for 'those who eat Me', says Scripture, 'will still behungry' (Eccles. 24:21) - let your intellect concentrate on the second half of the prayer and repeat the words 'Son ofGod, have mercy'. You must say this half over and over again and not out of laziness constantly change the words.For plants which are frequently transplanted do not put down roots. Restrain your breathing, so as not to breatheunimpededly; for when you exhale, the air, rising from the heart, beclouds the intellect and ruffles your thinking,keeping the intellect away from the heart. Then the intellect is either enslaved by forgetfulness or induced to give its

attention to all manner of things, insensibly becoming preoccupied with what it should ignore. If you see impure evilthoughts rising up and assuming various forms m your intellect, do not be startled. Even if images of good thingsappear to you, pay no attention to them. But restraining your breathing as much as

possible and enclosing yourintellect in your heart, invoke the Lord Jesus continuously and diligently and you will swiftly consume and subduethem, flaying them invisibly with the divine name. For St John Klimakos says, 'With the name of Jesus lash yourenemies, for there is no more powerful weapon in heaven or on earth.'

3. Isaiah the Solitary is one of many who affirm that when praying[V4] 265

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you have to restrain your breath. Another author says that you have to control your uncontrollable intellect,impelled and dispersed as it is by the satanic power which seizes hold of your lax soul because of your negligenceafter baptism, bringing with it other spirits even more evil than itself and thus making your soul's state worse than itwas originally (cf Matt. 12:45). Another writer says that in a monk mindfulness of God ought to take the place ofbreathing, while another declares that the love of God acts as a brake on his out-breathing. St Symeon the NewTheologian tells us, 'Restrain the drawing-in of breath through your nostrils, so as not to breathe easily': St JohnKlimakos says, 'Let mindfulness of Jesus be united to your breathing, and then you will know the blessings ofstillness.' St Paul affirms that it is not he who lives but Christ in him (cf. Gal. 2:20), activating him and inspiring himwith divine life. And the Lord, taking as an example the blowing of the physical wind, says, 'The Spirit blows whereHe wishes' (John 3:8). For when we were cleansed through baptism we received in seed-like form the foretaste ofthe Spirit (cf. 2 Cor. 1:22) and what St James calls the 'implanted Logos' (Jas. 1:21), embedded and as it wereconsolidated in us through an unparticipable participation; and, while keeping Himself inviolate and undmimished.He deifies us in His superabundant bounty. But then we neglected the commandments, the guardians of grace, andthrough this negligence we again fell into the clutches of the passions, filled with the afflatus of the evil spiritsinstead of the breath of the Holy Spirit. That is why, as the holy fathers explain, we are subject to lassitude andcontinually enervated. For had we laid hold of the Spirit and been purified by Him we would have been enkindledby Him and inspired with divine life, and would speak and think and act in the manner that the Lord indicates whenHe says, 'For it is not you that speak but the Spirit of My Father that speaks in you' (cf. Matt. 10:20). Conversely, ifwe embrace the devil and are mastered by him, we speak and act in the opposite manner.

4. 'When the watchman grows weary,' says St John Klimakos, 'he stands up and prays; then he sits down againand courageously resumes the same task.' Although St John is here referring to the intellect and

is saying that it should behave in this manner when it has learnt how to guard the heart, yet what he says canapply equally to psalmody. For it is said that when the great Varsanuphios was asked about how one shouldpsalmodize, he replied, 'The Hours and the liturgical Odes are church traditions, rightly given so that concord ismaintained when there are many praying together. But the monks of Sketis do not recite the Hours, nor do they singOdes. On their own they practice manual labor, meditation and a little prayer. When you stand in prayer, you shouldrepeat the Trisagion and the Lord's Prayer. You should also ask God to deliver you from your fallen selfhood. Donot grow slack in doing this; your mind should be concentrated in prayer all day long.' What St Varsanuphioswanted to make clear is that private meditation is the prayer of the heart, and that to practice 'a little prayer' means tostand and psalmodize. Moreover, St John Khmakos explicitly says that to attain the state of stillness entails first totaldetachment, secondly resolute prayer - this means standing and psalmodizmg - and thirdly, unbroken labor of theheart, that is to say, sitting down to pray in stillness.

Different Ways of Psalmodizing

5. Why do some teach that we should psalmodize a lot, others a little, and others that we should not psalmodize atall but should devote ourselves only to prayer and to physical exertion such as manual labor, prostrations or someother strenuous activity? The explanation is as follows. Those who have found grace through long, arduous practiceof the ascetic life teach others to find it in the same way. They do not believe that there are some who throughcognitive insight and fervent faith have by the mercy of God attained the state of grace in a short time, as St Isaac,for instance, recognizes. Led astray by ignorance and self-conceit they disparage such people, claiming that anythingdifferent from their own experience is delusion and not the operation of grace. They do not know that 'it is easy forGod to enrich

a poor man suddenly' (Eccles. 11:21), and that 'wisdom is the principal thing; therefore acquire wisdom', asProverbs says, referring to grace (4:7). Similarly St Paul is rebuking the disciples of his time who were ignorant ofgrace when he says, 'Do you not realize that Jesus Christ dwells within you, unless you are worthless?' (cf 2 Cor.13:5) - unless, that is to say, you make no progress because of your negligence. Thus in their disbelief and arrogancethey do not acknowledge the exceptional qualities of prayer activated in some people by the Spirit in a special way.

6. Objection: Tell me, if a person fasts, practices self-control, keeps vigils, stands, makes prostrations, grievesinwardly and lives in poverty, is this not active asceticism? How then do you advocate simply the singing of psalms,yet say that without ascetic labor it is impossible to succeed in prayer? Do not the activities I mention constituteascetic labor?

Answer. If you pray with your lips but your mind wanders, how do you benefit? 'When one builds and anothertears down, what do they gain but toil?' (Eccles. 34:23). As you labor with your body, so you must labor with your

intellect, lest you appear righteous in the body while your heart is filled with every form of injustice and impurity. StPaul confirms this when he says that if he prays with his tongue - that is, with his lips - his spirit or his voice prays,but his intellect is unproductive: 'I will pray with my spirit, and I will also pray with my intellect' (cf. 1 Cor. 14:14-15). And he adds, 'I would rather speak five words with my intellect than ten thousand with my tongue' (cf. 1 Cor.14:19). St John Klimakos, too, indicates that St Paul is speaking here about prayer when he says in his chapter onprayer, 'The great practitioner of sublime and perfect prayer says, "I would rather speak five words with myintellect." ' There are many other forms of spiritual work, yet not one in itself is all-sufficient; but prayer of the heart,according to St John Klimakos, is pre-eminent and all-embracing, the source of the virtues and catalyst of allgoodness. 'There is nothing more fearful than the thought of death,' says St Maxmios, 'or more wonderful thanmmdfulness of God,' indicating

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the supremacy of this activity. But some do not even wish to know that we can attain a state of active grace in thispresent life, so blinded and weak in faith are they because of their ignorance and obduracy.

7. In my opinion, those who do not psaknodize much act rightly, for it means that they esteem moderation - andaccording to the sages moderation is best in all things. In this way they do not expend all the energy of their soul inascetic labor, thus making the intellect negligent and slack where prayer is concerned. On the contrary, by devotingbut little time to psalmodizing, they can give most of their time to prayer. On the other hand, when the intellect isexhausted by continuous noetic invocation and intense concentration, it can be given some rest by releasing it fromthe straitness of silent prayer and allowing it to relax in the amplitude of psalmody. This is an excellent rule, taughtby the wisest men.

8. Those who do not psalmodize at all also act rightly, provided they are well advanced on the spiritual path. Suchpeople have no need to recite psalms; if they have attained the state of illumination, they should cultivate silence,uninterrupted prayer and contemplation. They are united with God and have no need to tear their intellect away fromHim and so to throw it into confusion. As St John Klimakos says, 'One under monastic obedience falls when hefollows his own will, while the hesychast falls when he is interrupted in his prayer.' For the hesychast commitsadultery in his intellect when he sunders it from its mindfulness of God: it is as if he were being unfaithful to his truespouse and philandering with trivial matters.

To impart this discipline to others is not always possible. But it can be taught to simple uneducated people whoare under obedience to a spiritual father, for such obedience, thanks to the humility that goes with it, can partake ofevery virtue. Those, however, who are not under this kind of obedience should not be taught it, regardless ofwhether they are unlearned people or educated: they may easily be deluded, because people who are a law untothemselves cannot avoid being conceited, and the natural result of conceit is delusion, as St Isaac says. Yet somepeople, unaware of the harm which will result, counsel anybody they happen to meet to practice this disciplinealone, so that their intellect may grow accustomed to being mindful of God and may come to love it. But this is notpossible, especially for those not under

obedience. For, because of their negligence and arrogance, their intellect is still impure and has not first beencleansed by tears; and so, instead of concentrating on prayer, they are filled with images of shameful thoughts, whilethe unclean spirits in their heart, panic-struck by the invocation of the dread name of the Lord Jesus, howl for thedestruction of the person who scourges them. Thus if you hear about or are taught this discipline, and want topractice it, but are not under spiritual direction you will experience one of two things: you will either force yourselfto persist, in which case you fall into delusion and will fail to attain healing; or you will grow negligent, in whichcase you will never make any progress during your whole life.

9. I will add this from my own small experience. When you sit in stillness, by day or by night, free from randomthoughts and continuously praying to God in humility, you may find that your intellect becomes exhausted throughcalling upon God and that your body and heart begin to feel pain because of the intense concentration with whichyou unceasingly invoke the name of Jesus, with the result that you no longer experience the warmth and joy thatengender ardor and patience in the spiritual aspirant. If this is the case, stand up and psalmodize, either by yourselfor with a disciple who lives with you, or occupy yourself with meditation on some scriptural passage or with theremembrance of death, or with manual labor or with some other thing, or give your attention to reading, preferablystanding up so as to involve your body in the task as well.

When you stand and psalmodize by yourself, recite the Trisagion and then pray in your soul or your intellect,making your intellect pay attention to your heart; and recite two or three psalms and a few penitential troparia butwithout chanting them: as St John Klimakos confirms, people at this stage of spiritual development do not chant. For'the suffering of the heart endured in a spirit of devotion', as St Mark puts it, is sufficient to produce joy in them, andthe warmth of the Spirit is given to them as a source of grace and exultation. After each psalm again pray in yourintellect or soul, keeping your thoughts from wandering, and repeat the Alleluia. This is the order established

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by the holy fathers Varsanuphios, Diadochos and others. And as St Basil the Great says, one should vary thepsalms daily to enkindle one's fervor and to prevent the intellect from getting bored with having to recite always thesame things. The intellect should be given freedom and then its fervor will be quickened.' If you stand andpsalmodize with a trusted disciple, let him recite the psalms while you guard yourself, secretly watching your heartand praying. With the help of prayer ignore all images, whether sensory or conceptual, that rise up from the heart.For stillness means the shedding of all thoughts for a time, even those which are divine and engendered by theSpirit; otherwise through giving them our attention because they are good we will lose what is better.

10. So, lover of God, attend with care and intelligence. If while engaged in spiritual work you see a light or a fire

outside you, or a form supposedly of Christ or of an angel or of someone else, reject it lest you suffer harm. And donot pay court to images, lest you allow them to stamp themselves on your intellect. For all these things thatexternally and inopportunely assume various guises do so in order to delude your soul. The true beginning of prayeris the warmth of heart that scorifies the passions, fills the soul with joy and delight, and establishes the heart inunwavering love and unhesitating surety. The holy fathers teach that if the heart is in doubt about whether to acceptsomething either sensory or conceptual that enters the soul, then that thing is not from God but has been sent by thedevil. Moreover, if you become aware that your intellect is being enticed by some invisible power either from theoutside or from above, do not trust in that power or let your intellect be so enticed, but immediately force it tocontinue its work. Unceasingly cry out: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy', and do not allow yourself toretain any concept, object, thought or form that is supposedly divine, or any sequence of argument or any color, butconcentrate solely on the pure, simple, formless remembrance of Jesus. Then God, seeing your intellect so strict inguarding itself in every way against the enemy, will Himself bestow pure and unerring vision upon it and will makeit participate in God and share in all other blessings.

What is of God, says St Isaac, comes of itself, without you knowing when it will come. Our natural enemy - thedemon who operates in the seat of our desiring power - gives the spirit-forces various guises in

our imagination. In this way he substitutes his own unraly heat for spiritual warmth, so that the soul is oppressedby this deceit. For spiritual delight he substitutes mindless joy and a muggy sense of pleasure, inducing self-satisfaction and vanity. Thus he tries to conceal himself from those who lack experience and to persuade them totake his delusions for manifestations of spiritual joy. But time, experience and perspicacity will reveal him to thosenot entirely ignorant of his wiles. As the palate discriminates between different kinds of food (cf. Eccles. 36:18,19),so the spiritual sense of taste clearly and unerringly reveals everything as it truly is.

11. 'Since you are engaged in spiritual warfare,' says St John Klimakos, 'you should read texts concerned withascetic practice. Translating such texts into action makes other reading superfluous.' Read works of the fathersrelated to stillness and prayer, like those of St John Klimakos, St Isaac, St Maxmios, St Neilos, St Hesychios,Philotheos of Sinai, St Symeon the New Theologian and his disciple Stithatos, and whatever else exists of writers ofthis kind. Leave other books for the time being, not because they are to be rejected, but because they do notcontribute to your present purpose, diverting the intellect from prayer by their narrative character. Read by yourself,but not in a pompous voice, or with pretentious eloquence or affected enunciation or melodic delectation, or,insensibly carried away by passion, as if you are wanting to please an audience. Do not read with inordinate avidity,for in all things moderation is best, nor on the other hand in a rough, sluggish or negligent manner. On the contrary,read reverently, gently, steadily, with understanding, and at an even pace, your intellect, your soul and your reasonall engaged. When the intellect is invigorated by such reading, it acquires the strength to pray harder. But if you readin the contrary manner - as I have described it above - you cloud the intellect and make it sluggish and distracted, sothat you develop a headache and grow slack in prayer.

12. Continually take careful note of your inner intention: watch carefully which way it inclines, and discover

whether it is for God and for the sake of goodness itseh" and the benefit of your soul that you practice stillness orpsalmodize or read or pray or cultivate some virtue. Otherwise you may unknowingly be ensnared and prove to bean ascetic in outward appearance alone while in your manner of life and

inner intention you are wanting to impress men, and not to conform to God. For the devil's traps are many, and hepersistently and secretly watches the bias of our intention, without most of us being aware of it, strivingimperceptibly to corrupt our labor so that what we do is not done in accordance with God's will. But even if heattacks and assaults you relentlessly and shamelessly, and even if he distracts the bias of your will and makes itwaver in spite of your efforts to prevent it, you will not often be caught out by him so long as you keep yourselfsteadfastly intent on God. If again in spite of your efforts you are overcome through weakness, you will swiftly beforgiven and praised by Hun who knows our intentions and our hearts. There is, however, one passion - self-esteem- that does not permit a monk to grow in virtue, so that though he engages in ascetic labors in the end he remainsbarren. For whether you are a beginner, or midway along the spiritual path, or have attained the stage of perfection,self-esteem always tries to insinuate itself, and it nullifies your efforts to live a holy life, so that you waste your timein listlessness and day-dreaming.

13.1 have also learnt this from experience, that unless a monk cultivates the following virtues he will never makeprogress: fasting, self-control, keeping vigil, patient endurance, courage, stillness, prayer, silence, inward grief andhumility. These virtues generate and protect each other. Constant fasting withers lust and begets self-control. Self-control enables us to keep vigils, vigils beget patient endurance, endurance courage, courage stillness, stillnessprayer, prayer silence, silence inward grief, and grief begets humility. Or, going in the reverse order, you will findhow daughters give birth to mothers - how, that is to say, humility begets inward grief, and so on. In the realm of thevirtues there is nothing more important than this form of mutual generation. The things opposite to these virtues areobvious to all.

14. Here we should specify the toils and hardships of the ascetic life and explain clearly how we should embarkon each task. We must do this lest someone who coasts along without exerting himself, simply relying on what hehas heard, and who consequently remains barren, should blame us or other writers, alleging that things are not as wehave said. For it is only through travail of heart and bodily toil that the work can properly be carried out. Throughthem the grace of the Holy Spirit is revealed. This is the grace with which we and all Christians are

endowed atbaptism but which through neglect of the commandments

has been stifled by the passions. Now through God's ineffable mercy it awaits our repentance, so that at the end of

our life we may not because of our barrenness hear the words 'Take the talent from him', and 'What he thinks he haswill be taken away from him' (cf. Matt. 25:28-29), and may not be sent to hell to suffer endlessly in Gehenna. Noactivity, whether bodily or spiritual, unaccompanied by toil and hardship bears fruit; 'for the kingdom of heaven isentered forcibly,' says the Lord, 'and those who force themselves take possession of it' (Matt. 11:12), where 'forcibly'and 'force' relate to the body's awareness of exertion in all things.

Many for long years may have been preoccupied with the spiritual life without exerting themselves, or may stillbe preoccupied with it in this way; but because they do not assiduously embrace hardships with heartfelt fervor andsense of purpose, and have repudiated the severity of bodily toil, they remain devoid of purity, without a share in theHoly Spirit. Those who practice the spiritual life, but do so carelessly and lazily, may think that they makeconsiderable efforts; but they will never reap any harvest because they have not exerted themselves and basicallyhave never experienced any real tribulation. A witness to this is St John Klnnakos, who says, 'However exalted ourway of life may be, it is worthless and bogus if our heart does not suffer.' Sometimes when we fail to exert ourselveswe are in our listlessness carried away by spurious forms of distraction and plunged into darkness, thinking we canfind rest in them when that is impossible. The truth is that we are then bound invisibly by unloosable cords andbecome inert and ineffective in everything we do, for we grow increasingly sluggish, especially if we are beginners.For those who have reached the stage of perfection everything is profitable in moderation. St Ephrem also testifies tothis when he says, 'Persistently suffer hardships in order to avoid the hardship of vain sufferings.' For unless, to usethe prophet's phrase, our loins are exhausted by the weakness induced through the exertions of fasting, and unlesslike a woman in childbirth we are afflicted with pains arising from the constriction of our heart, we will not conceivethe Spirit of salvation in the earth of our heart (cf. Isa. 21:3; 26:18). Instead, all we will have to boast about is themany profitless years we

have spent in the wilderness, lazily cultivating stillness and imagining that we are

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somebody. At the moment of our death we will all know for certain what is the outcome of our life.

15. No one can learn the art of virtue by himself, though some have taken experience as their teacher. For to acton one's own and not on the advice of those who have gone before us is overweening presumption - or, rather, itengenders such presumption. If the Son does nothing of His own accord, but does only what the Father has taughtHim (cf John 5:19-20), and the Spirit will not speak of His own accord (cf. John 16:3), who can think he hasattained such heights of virtue that he does not need anyone to initiate him into the mysteries? Such a person isdeluded and out of his mind rather than virtuous. One should therefore listen, to those who have experienced thehardships involved in cultivating the virtues and should cultivate them as they have - that is to say, by severe fasting,painful self-control, steadfast vigils, laborious genuflexions, assiduous standing motionless, constant prayer,unfeigned humility, ceaseless contrition and compunctive sorrow, eloquent silence, as if seasoned with salt (cf. Col.4:6), and by patience in all things. You must not be always relaxing or pray sitting down, before it is the proper timeto do so, or before age or sickness compels you. For, as Scripture says, 'You will nourish yourself on the hardshipsof your practice of the virtues' (cf. Ps. 128:2. LXX); and, 'The kingdom of heaven is entered forcibly' (Matt. 11:12).Hence those who diligently strive day by day to practice the virtues that we have mentioned will with God's help

gather in the harvest at the appropriate time.

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St Gregory of SinaiOn Prayer: Seven Texts

How the Hesychast Should Sit for Prayer and Not Rise Again Too Quickly

1. Sometimes - and most often - you should sit on a stool, because it is more arduous; but sometimes, for a break,you should sit for a while on a mattress. As

you sit be patient and assiduous, in accordance with St Paul's precept,'Cleave patiently to prayer' (Col. 4:2). Do not grow discouraged and quickly rise up again because of the strain andeffort needed to keep your intellect concentrated on its inner invocation. It is as the prophet says: 'The birth-pangsare upon me, like those of a woman in travail' (Isa. 21:3). You must bend down and gather your intellect into yourheart - provided it has been opened - and call on the Lord Jesus to help you. Should you feel pain in your shouldersor in your head - as you often will - endure it patiently and fervently, seeking the Lord in your heart. For 'thekingdom of God is entered forcibly, and those who force themselves take possession of it' (Matt. 11:12). With thesewords the Lord truly indicated the persistence and labor needed in this task. Patience and endurance in all thingsinvolve hardship in both body and soul.

How to Say the Prayer

2. Some of the fathers advise us to say the whole prayer, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy', while othersspecify that we say it in two parts - 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy', and then 'Son of God, help me' - because this iseasier, given the immaturity and feebleness of our

How to Say the Prayer

intellect. For no one on his own account and without the help of the Spirit can mystically invoke the Lord Jesus,for this can be done with purity and in its fullness only with the help of the Holy Spirit (cf 1 Cor. 12:3). Likechildren who can still speak only faltenngly, we are unable by ourselves to articulate the prayer properly. Yet wemust not out of laziness frequently change the words of the invocation, but only do this rarely, so as to ensurecontinuity. Again, some fathers teach that the prayer should be said aloud; others, that it should be said silently withthe intellect. On the basis of my personal experience I recommend both ways. For at times the intellect grows listlessand cannot repeat the prayer, while at other times the same thing happens to the voice. Thus we should pray bothvocally and in the intellect. But when we pray vocally we should speak quietly and calmly and not loudly, so that the

voice does not disturb and hinder the intellect's consciousness and concentration.

This is always a danger until theintellect grows accustomed to its work, makes progress and receives power from the Spirit to pray firmly and withcomplete attention. Then there will be no need to pray aloud - indeed, it will be impossible, for we shall be contentto cany out the whole work with the intellect alone.

How to Master the Intellect in Prayer

3. .No one can master the intellect unless he himself is mastered by the Spirit. For the intellect is uncontrollable,not because it is by nature ever-active, but because through our continual remissness it has been given over todistraction and has become used to that. When we violated the commandments of Him who in baptism regeneratesus we separated ourselves from God and lost our conscious awareness of Him and our union with Him. Sunderedfrom that union and estranged from God, the intellect is led captive everywhere; and it cannot regain its stabilityunless it submits to God and is stilled by Him, joyfully uniting with Him through unceasing and diligent prayer andthrough noetically confessing all our lapses to Him each day. God immediately forgives everything to those who askforgiveness in a spirit of humility and contrition and who ceaselessly invoke His holy name. As the

How to Master the Intellect in Prayer

Psalmist says, 'Confess to the Lord and call upon His holy name' (cf. Ps. 105:1). Holding the breath also helps tostabilize the intellect, but only temporarily, for after a little it lapses into distraction again. But when prayer isactivated, then it really does keep the intellect in its presence, and it gladdens it and frees it from captivity. But itmay sometimes happen that the intellect, rooted in the heart, is praying, yet the mind wanders and gives its attentionto other things; for the mind is brought under control only in those who have been made perfect by the Holy Spiritand who have attained a state of total concentration upon Christ Jesus.

How to Expel Thoughts

4. In the case of a beginner in the art of spiritual warfare. God alone can expel thoughts, for it is only those strongin such warfare who are in a position to

wrestle with them and banish them. Yet even they do not achieve this bythemselves, but they fight against them with God's assistance, clothed in the armor of His grace. So when thoughtsinvade you, in place of weapons call on the Lord Jesus frequently and persistently and then they will retreat; for theycannot bear the warmth produced in the heart by prayer and they flee as if scorched by fire. St John Klimakos tellsus, 'Lash your enemies with the name of Jesus', because God is a fire the cauterizes wickedness (cf. Deut. 4:24; Heb.12:29). The Lord is prompt to help, and will speedily come to the defense of those who wholeheartedly call on Himday and night (cf Luke 18:7). But if prayer is not yet activated in you, you can put these thoughts to flight in another

manner, by imitating Moses (of. Exod. 17:11-12); rise up, lift hands and eyes to heaven, and God will rout them.Then sit down again and begin to pray resolutely. This is what you should do if you have not yet acquired the powerof prayer. Yet even if prayer is activated in you and you are attacked by the more obdurate and grievous of thebodily passions - namely, listlessness and lust - you should sometimes rise up and lift your hands for help againstthem. But you should do this only seldom, and then sit down again, for

How to Expel Thoughts

there is a danger of the enemy deluding you by showing you some illusory form of the truth. For only in thosewho are pure and perfect does God keep the intellect steadfast and intact wherever it is, whether above or below, orin the heart.

How to Psalmodize

5. Some say that we should psalmodize seldom, others often, others not at all. You for your part should notpsalmodize often, for that induces unrest, nor yet not at all, for that induces indolence and negligence. Instead youshould follow the example of those who psalmodize from time to time, for moderation in all things is best, as theancient Greeks tell us. To psalmodize often is appropriate for novices in the ascetic life, because of the toil itinvolves and the spiritual knowledge it confers. It is not appropriate for hesychasts, since they concentrate whollyupon praying to God with travail of heart, eschewing all conceptual

images. For according to St John Klimakos,'Stillness is the shedding of thoughts', whether of sensible or of intelligible realities. Moreover, if we expend all ourenergy in reciting many psalms, our intellect will grow slack and will not be able to pray firmly and resolutely.Again according to St John Klimakos, 'Devote-most of the night to prayer and only a little of it to psalmody.'

You, too, should do the same. If you are seated and you see that prayer is continuously active in your heart, do notabandon it and get up to psalmodize until in God's good time it leaves you of its own accord. Otherwise, abandoningthe interior presence of God, you will address yourself to Him from without, thus passing from a higher to a lowerstate, provoking unrest and disrupting the intellect's serenity. Stillness, in accordance with its name, is maintained bymeans of peace and serenity; for God is peace (cf. Eph. 2:14) beyond all unrest and clamor. Our psalmody, too,should accord with our mode of life, and be angelic, not unspiritual and secular. For to psalmodize with clamor

and a loud voice is a sign of inner turbulence. Psalmody has been given to us because of our grossness andindolence, so that we may be led back to our true state.

As for those not yet initiated into prayer - this prayer which, according to St John Klimakos, is the source of thevirtues' and which waters, as plants, the faculties of the soul - they should psalmodize frequently, without measure,reciting a great variety of psalms; and they should not desist from such assiduous practice until they have attainedthe state of contemplation and find that noetic prayer is activated within them. For the practice of stillness is onething and that of community life is another. 'Let each persist in that to which he is called' (1 Cor. 7:24) and he willbe saved. It was on account of this that I hesitated to write to you, for I know that you live among those still weak. Ifsomeone's experience of praying derives from hearsay or reading; he will lose his way, for he lacks a guide.According to the fathers, once you have tasted grace you should psalmodize sparingly, giving most of your time toprayer. But if you find yourself growing indolent you should psalmodize or read patristic texts. A ship has no

needof oars when a fair wind swells the sails and drives it lightly across the salt sea of the passions. But when it isbecalmed it has to be propelled by oars or towed by another boat.

To gainsay this, some point to the holy fathers, or to certain living persons, saying that they kept all-night watchespsalmodizing the whole time. But, as we learn from Scripture, not all things can be accomplished by everyone, forsome lack diligence and strength. As St John Klimakos says, 'Small things may not always seem so to the great, andgreat things may not seem altogether perfect to the small' Everything is easy for the perfect; and not everyone, eithernow or in former times, remains always a probationer, nor does everyone travel along the same road or pursue it tothe end. Many have passed from the life of ascetic labor to the life of contemplation, laying aside outward practices,keeping the Sabbath according to the spiritual law, and delighting in God alone. They are replete with divine fare,and the grace that fills them does not permit them to psalmodize or to meditate on anything else; for the time beingthey are in a state of ecstasy, having attained, if only in part and as a foretaste, the ultimate

desire of all desires. Others have been saved through pursuing the life of ascetic labor until their death, awaitingtheir reward in the life to come. Some have received conscious assurance of salvation at their death, or else afterdeath they have given off a fragrant odor as testimony to their salvation. Like all other Christians they had receivedthe grace of baptism, but because of the distraught and ignorant state of their intellects they did not participate in itmystically while still alive. Others excel in both psalmody and prayer and spend their lives in this manner, richlyendowed with ever-active grace and not impeded by anything. Yet others, being unlettered and restrictingthemselves solely to prayer, have persevered in stillness until the end of their lives; and in doing this they have donewell, uniting themselves as single individuals with God alone. To the perfect, as we said, all things are possiblethrough Christ who is their strength (cf Phil. 4:13).

How to Partake of Food

6. What shall I say about the belly, the queen of the passions? If you can deaden or half-deaden it, do not relent. Ithas mastered me, beloved, and I worship it as a slave and vassal, this abettor of the demons and dwelling-place ofthe passions. Through it we fall and through it - when it is well-disciplined - we rise again. Through it we have lostboth our original divine status and also our second divine status, that which was bestowed on us when after ourinitial corruption we are renewed in Christ through baptism, and from which we have lapsed once more, separatingourselves from God through our neglect of the commandments, even though in our ignorance we exalt ourselves.We think that we are with God, but it is only by keeping the commandments that we advance, guarding andincreasing the grace bestowed upon us.

As the fathers have pointed out, bodies vary greatly in their need for food. One person needs little, another muchto sustain his physical strength, each according to his capacity and habit. A hesychast, however, should always eattoo little, never too much. For when the stomach is heavy the intellect is clouded, and you cannot pray resolutely andwith purity. On the contrary, made drowsy by the effects of too much food you are soon induced to sleep; and as you

sleep the food produces countless fantasies in your mind. Thus in my opinion if you want to attain salvation andstrive for the Lord's sake to lead a life of stillness, you should be satisfied with a pound of bread and three or fourcups of water or wine daily, taking at appropriate times a little from whatever victuals happen to be at hand, butnever eating to satiety. In this way you will avoid growing conceited, and by thanking God for everything you willshow no disdain for the excellent things He has made. This is the counsel of those who are wise in such matters. Forthose weak in faith and soul, abstinence from specific types of food is most beneficial; St Paul exhorts them to eatherbs (cf Rom. 14:2), for they do not believe that God will preserve them.

What shall I say? You are old, yet have asked for a rule, and an extremely severe one at that. Younger peoplecannot keep to a strict rule by weight and measure, so how will you keep to it? Because you are ill, you should beentirely free in

partaking of food. If you eat too much, repent and try again. Always act like this - lapsing andrecovering again, and always blaming yourself and no one else - and you will be at peace, wisely converting suchlapses into victories, as Scripture says. But do not exceed the limit I set down above, and this will be enough, for noother food strengthens the body as much as bread and water. That is why the prophet disregarded everything elseand simply said, 'Son of man, by weight you will eat your bread and by measure you will drink water' (cf. Ezek.4:16).

There are three degrees of eating: self-control, sufficiency and satiety. Self-control is to be hungry after havingeaten. Sufficiency is to be neither hungry nor weighed down. Satiety is to be slightly weighed down. To eat againafter reaching the point of satiety is to open the door of gluttony, through which unchastity comes in. Attentive tothese distinctions, choose what is best for you according to your powers, not overstepping the limits. For accordingto St Paul only the perfect can be both hungry and full, and at the same time be strong in all things (cf. Phil. 4:12).

On Delusion and Other Subjects

7. I wish you to be fully informed about delusion, so that you can guard yourself against it and not do great harmto yourself through

ignorance, and lose your soul. For our free will easily veers towards keeping company with the demons,especially when we are inexperienced and still under their sway. Around beginners and those who rely on their owncounsel the demons spread the nets of destructive thoughts and images, and open pits into which such people fall;for their city is still in the hands of the workers of iniquity, and in their impetuosity they are easily slain by them. Itis not surprising that they are deceived, or lose their wits, or have been and still are deluded, or heed what is contraryto trath, or from inexperience and ignorance say things that should not be said. Often some witless person will speakabout truth and will hold forth at length without being aware of what he is saying or in a position to give a correctaccount of things. In this way he troubles many who hear him and

by his inept behavior he brings abuse and ridiculeon the heads of hesychasts. It is not in the least strange that beginners should be deceived even after making greatefforts, for this has happened to many who have sought God, both now and in the past.

Mindfulness of God, or noetic prayer, is superior to all other activities. Indeed, being love for God, it is the chiefvirtue. But a person who is brazen and shameless in his approach to God, and who is over-zealous in his efforts toconverse with Him in purity and to possess Him inwardly, is easily destroyed by the demons if they are givenlicense to attack him; for in rashly and presumptuously striving prematurely to attain what is beyond his presentcapacity, he becomes a victim of his own arrogance. The Lord in His compassion often prevents us fromsuccumbing to temptation when He sees us aspiring over-confidently to attain what is still beyond our powers, for inthis way He gives each of us the opportunity of discovering his own presumption and so of repenting of his ownaccord before making himself the butt of demons as well as of other people's ridicule or pity. Especially is this thecase when we try to accomplish this task with patience and contrition; for we stand in need of much sorrow andlamentation, of solitude, deprivation of all things, hardship and humility, and - most important of all for itsmarvelous effects - of guidance and obedience; for otherwise we might unknowingly reap thorns instead of wheat,gall instead of sweetness, ruin instead of salvation. Only the strong and the perfect can continuously fight alone withthe demons, wielding against them the sword of the Spirit, which is the teaching of God (cf Eph. 6:17). The weakand beginners

escape death by taking refuge in flight, reverently and with fear withdrawing from the battle rather than riskingtheir life prematurely.

For your part, if you are rightly cultivating stillness and aspiring to be with God, and you see something eithersensory or noetic, within or without, be it even an image of Christ or of an angel or of some saint, or you imagineyou see a light in your intellect and give it a specific form, you should never entertain it. For the

intellect itselfnaturally possesses an imaginative power and in those who do not keep a strict watch over it it can easily produce, toits own hurt, whatever forms and images it wants to. In this way the recollection of things good or evil can suddenlyimprint images on the intellect's perceptive faculty and so induce it to entertain fantasies, thus making whoever thishappens to a daydreamer rather than a hesychast.

Be careful, therefore, not to entertain and readily give assent to anything even if it be good, before questioningthose with spiritual experience and investigating it thoroughly, so as not to come to any harm. Always be suspiciousof it and keep your intellect free from colors, forms and images. For it has often happened that things sent by God totest our free will, to see which way it inclines and to act as a spur to our efforts, have in fact had bad consequences.For when we see something, whether with mind or senses - even if this thing be from God - and then readilyentertain it without consulting those experienced in such matters, we are easily deceived, or will be in the future,because of our gullibility. A novice should pay close attention solely to the activity of his heart, because this is notled astray. Everything else he must reject until the passions are quietened. For God does not censure those who outof fear of being deluded pay strict attention to themselves, even though this means that they refuse to entertain whatHe sends them until they have questioned others and made careful enquiry. Indeed, He is more likely to praise theirprudence, even though in some cases He is grieved.

Yet you should not question everyone. You should go only to one, to someone who has been entrusted with theguidance of others as well, who is radiant alike in his life and in his words, and who although poor makes many rich(cf. 2 Cor. 6:10). For people lacking spiritual experience have often done harm to foolish questioners, and for thisthey will be judged after death. Not everyone is qualified to guide others: only those can do so who have beengranted divine discrimination - what St Paul calls the 'discrimination of spirits'

(1 Cor. 12:10) - enabling them to distinguish between bad and good with the sword of God's teaching (cf. Eph.6:17). Everyone possesses his own private

knowledge and discrimination, whether inborn, pragmatic or scientific,but not all possess spiritual knowledge and discrimination. That is why Sirach said, 'Be at peace with many, but letyour counselors be one in a thousand' (Eccles. 6:6). It is hard to find a guide who in all he does, says or thinks is freefrom delusion. You can tell that a person is undeluded when his actions and judgment are founded on the testimonyof divine Scripture, and when he is humble in whatever he has to give his mind to. No little effort is needed to attaina clear understanding of the truth and to be cleansed from whatever is contrary to grace, for the devil - especially in

the case of beginners - is liable to present his delusions in the forms of truth, thus giving his deceit a spiritual guise.

If, then, you are striving in stillness to attain a state of pure prayer, you must journey with great trepidation andinward grief, questioning those with spiritual experience, accepting their guidance, always lamenting your sins, andfull of distress and fear lest you should be chastised or should fall away from God and be divorced from Him in thislife or the next. For when the devil sees someone leading a penitent life, he retreats, frightened of the humility thatsuch inward grief engenders. But if, with a longing that is satanic rather than authentic, you are presumptuousenough to imagine that you have attained a lofty state, the devil will easily trap you in his nets and make you hisslave. Thus the surest guard against falling from the joy of prayer into a state of conceit is to persevere in prayer andinward grief, for by embracing a solace-filled grief you keep yourself safe from harm. Authentic prayer - the warmththat accompanies the Jesus Prayer, for it is Jesus who enkindles fire on the earth of our hearts (cf. Luke 12:49) -consumes the passions like thorns and fills the soul with delight and joyfulness. Such prayer comes neither fromright or left, nor from above, but wells up in the heart like a spring of water from the life-quickening Spirit. It is thisprayer alone that you should aspire to realize and possess in your heart, always keeping your intellect free fromimages, concepts and thoughts. And do not be afraid, for He who says, "Take heart; it is I; be not afraid' (Matt.14:27), is with us - He whom we seek and who protects us always. When we invoke God we must be neither timidnor hesitant.

If some have gone astray and lost their mental balance, this is[V4] 285

because they have in arrogance followed their own counsels. For when you seek God in obedience and humility,and with the guidance of a spiritual master, you will never come to any harm, by the grace of Christ who desires allto be saved (cf 1 Tim. 2:4). Should temptation arise, its purpose is to test you and to spur you on; and God, who haspermitted this testing, will speedily come to your help in whatever way He sees fit. As the holy fathers assure us, aperson who lives an upright and blameless life, avoiding arrogance and spuming popularity, will come to no harmeven if a whole host of demons provoke him with countless temptations. But if you are presumptuous and followyour own counsel you will readily fall victim to delusion. That is why a hesychast must always keep to the royalroad. For excess in anything easily leads to conceit, and conceit induces self-delusion. Keep the intellect at rest bygently pressing your lips together when you pray, but do not impede your nasal breathing, as the ignorant do, in caseyou harm yourself by building up inward pressure.

There are three virtues connected with stillness which we must guard scrupulously, examining ourselves everyhour to make sure that we possess them, in case through unmmdfulness we are robbed of them and wander far awayfrom them. These virtues are self-control, silence and self-reproach, which is the same thing as humility. They areall-embracing and support one another; and from them prayer is bom and through them it burgeons.

Grace begins to operate in people during prayer in different ways, for, as the apostle says, the Spirit distributesHimself as He wills in a variety of modes, and is perceived and known correspondingly (cf. Heb. 2:4). Elijah theTishbite serves here as an example for us (cf. 1 Kgs. 19:11-12). In some the Spirit appears as a whirlwind of awe.

dissolving the mountains of the passions and shattering the rocks of our hardened hearts, so that our worldly self istranspierced and mortified. In others the Spirit appears as an earthquake, that is to say as a sense of inward jubilationor what the fathers more clearly define as a sense of exultation. In others He is manifested inwardly as a fire that isnon-material yet real; for what is unreal and imaginary is also non-existent. Finally, in others - particularly in thosewell advanced in prayer - God produces a gentle and serene flow of light. This is when Christ comes to dwell in theheart, as St Paul says (cf. Eph. 3:17), mystically disclosing Himself through the Holy Spirit. That is why God said

toElijah on Mount Horeb that the Lord was not in this or in that -

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not in the particular actions He manifests Himself in to beginners - but in the gentle flow of light; for it is in thisthat He attests the perfection of our prayer.

Question: What should we do when the devil transforms himself into an angel of light (cf 2 Cor. 11:14) and triesto seduce us?

Answer: You need great discrimination in order to distinguish between good and evil. So do not readily or lightlyput your trust in appearances, but weigh things well, and after testing everything carefully cleave to what is goodand reject what is evil (cf. 1 Thess. 5:21-2). You must test and discriminate before you give credence to anything.You must also be aware that the effects of grace are self-evident, and that even if the devil does transform himself hecannot produce these effects: he cannot induce you to be gentle, or forbearing, or humble, or joyful, or serene, orstable in your thoughts; he cannot make you hate what is worldly, or cut off sensual indulgence and the working ofthe passions, as grace does. He produces vanity, haughtiness, cowardice and every kind of evil. Thus you can tellfrom its effects whether the light shining in your soul is from God or from Satan. The lettuce is similar inappearance to the endive, and vinegar, to wine; but when you taste them the palate discerns and recognizes thedifferences between each. In the same way the soul, if it possesses the power of discrimination, can distinguish withits noetic sense between the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the illusions of Satan.

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(c. 1265-1346)(Volume 4, pp. 207-286)

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St Gregory of SinaiOn Commandments and Doctrines, Warnings and Promises; On Thoughts,Passions and Virtues, and Also on Stillness and Prayer:One Hundred and Thirty-Seven Texts

1. You cannot be or become spiritually intelligent in the way that is natural to man in his pre-fallen state unlessyou first attain purity and freedom from corruption. For our purity has been overlaid by a state of sense-dominatedmindlessness, and our original mcorruption by the corruption of the flesh.

2. Only those who through their purity have become saints are spiritually intelligent in the way that is natural toman in his pre-fallen state. Mere skill in reasoning does not make a person's intelligence pure, for since the fall ourintelligence has been corrupted by evil thoughts. The materialistic and wordy spirit of the wisdom of this world maylead us to speak about ever wider spheres of knowledge, but it renders our thoughts increasingly crude and uncouth.

This combination of well-infonned talk and crude thought faUs far short of real wisdom and contemplation, as wellas of undivided and unified knowledge.

3. By knowledge of truth understand above all apprehension of truth through grace. Other kinds of knowledgeshould be regarded as images of mtellections or

the rational demonstration of facts.

4. If you fail to receive grace it is because of your lack of faith and your negligence; if you find it again it isbecause of your faith and your diligence. For faith and diligence always conduce to progress, while their oppositesdo the reverse.

5. To be utterly senseless is like being dead, and to be blind in intellect is like not seeing physically. To be utterlysenseless is to be deprived of life-giving energizmg power; to be blind in intellect is to be

deprived of the divine light by which a man can see and be seen by God.

6. Few men receive both power and wisdom from God. Through power we partake of divine blessings; throughwisdom we manifest them. This participation and this communication to others is a truly divine gift, beyond man'sunaided capacity.

7. A true sanctuary, even before the life to come, is a heart free from distractive thoughts and energized by theSpirit, for all is done and said there spiritually. If we do not attain such a state in this life, we may because of ourother virtues be a stone fit for building into the temple of God; but we will not ourselves be a temple or a celebrantof the Spirit.

8. Man is created incorruptible, without bodily humors, and thus he will be when resurrected. Yet he is not createdeither immutable or mutable, since he possesses the power to choose at will whether to be subject to change or notBut the will cannot confer total immutability of nature upon him. Such immutability is bestowed only when he hasattained the state of changeless deification.

9. Corruption is generated by the flesh. To feed, to excrete, to stride about and to sleep are the naturalcharacteristics of beasts and wild animals; acquiring these characteristics through the fall, we have become beast-like, losing the natural blessings bestowed on us by God. We have become brutal instead of spiritually

intelligent,ferine instead of godlike.

10. Paradise is twofold - sensible and spiritual: there is the paradise of Eden and the paradise of grace. Theparadise of Eden is so exalted that it is said to extend to the third heaven. It has been planted by God with every kindof sweet-scented plant. It is neither entirely free from comiption nor altogether subject to it. Created betweencorruption and mcorruption, it is always rich in fruits, ripe and unripe, and continually full of flowers. When treesand ripe fruit rot and fall to the ground they turn into sweet-scented soil, free from the smell of decay exuded by thevegetable-matter of this world. That is because of the great richness and holiness of the grace ever abounding there.The river Ocean, appointed always to irrigate paradise with its waters, flows through the middle of it. On leavingparadise, it divides into four other rivers, and flowing down to the Indians and Ethiopians brings them soil and fallen

leaves. Their fields are flooded by the united rivers of Pison and Gihon until these[V4] 214

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divide again, the one watering Libya and the other the land of Egypt (rf. Gen. 2:8-14).

11. It is said that when the world was first created it was not subject to flux and corruption. According to Scriptureit was only later corrupted and 'made subject to vanity' - that is, to man - not by its own choice but by the will ofHim to whom it is subject, the expectation being that Adam, who had fallen into corruption, would be restored to hisoriginal state (cf Rom. 8:20-21). For by renewing man and sanctifying him, even though in this transient life hebears a corruptible body. God also renewed creation, although creation is not yet freed from the process ofcorruption. This deliverance from corruption is said by some to be a translation to a better state, by others to requirea complete transmutation of everything sensory. Scripture generally makes simple and straightforward statementsabout matters that are still obscure.

12. People who have received grace are as if impregnated and with child by the Holy Spirit; but they may abortthe divine seed through sinning, or divorce

themselves from God through intercourse with the enemy lurking withinthem. It is the turbulence of the passions that aborts grace, while the act of sinning deprives us of it altogether. Apassion- and sin-loving soul, shorn of grace and divorced from God, is the haunt of passions - not to say of demons -in this world and the next.

13. Nothing so converts anger into joy and gentleness as courage and mercy. Like a siege-engine, courage shattersenemies attacking the soul from without, mercy those attacking it from within.

14. Many who practice the commandments think they are following the spiritual path. But they have not yetreached the city, and in fact remain outside it. For they travel foolishly, deviating unawares from the straighthighway into side-roads, not realizing how close the vices are to the path of virtue. For the trae fulfillment of thecommandments demands that we do neither too little nor too much but simply pursue a course acceptable to Godand in accordance with His will. Otherwise we labor in vain and do not make straight the paths of the Lord (cf. Isa.40:3). For in everything we do we must be clear about the goal we are pursuing.

15. To be on the spiritual path means seeking the Lord in your heart through fulfilling the commandments. Forwhen you listen to John the Baptist crying in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way of the Lord,

make His paths straight' (Matt. 3:3), you must understand that he is referring to the commandments and theirfulfillment both in the heart and in actions. It is impossible to 'make straight' the path of the commandments and toact rightly unless your heart too is straight and upright.

16. When Scripture speaks of rod and staff (cf. Ps. 23:4), you should take these to signify in the prophetic sensejudgment and providence, and in the moral sense psalmody and prayer. For when we are chastened by the Lord withme rod of correction (cf 1 Cor. 11:32), this is so that we may learn how to mend our ways. And when we chastenour assailants with the rod of dauntless psalmody, we

become established in prayer. Since we thus wield the rod andthe staff of spiritual action, let us not cease to chasten and be chastened until we are wholly in the hands ofprovidence and escape judgment both now and hereafter.

17. The essence of the commandments is always to give precedence to the one that embraces them all:mindfulness of God, as stipulated in the phrase, 'Always be mindful of the Lord your God' (cf. Deut. 8:18). Ourfailure or success in keeping the commandments depends on such mindfulness, for it is this that forgetfulness firstdestroys when it shrouds the commandments in darkness and strips us of every blessing.

18. Those engaged in spiritual warfare regain their original state by practicing two commandments - obedienceand fasting; for evil has infiltrated our human condition by means of their opposites. Those who keep thecommandments out of obedience return to God more quickly. Others who keep them by means of fasting and prayerreturn more slowly. Obedience befits beginners, fasting those in the middle way, who have attained a state ofspiritual enlightenment and self-mastery. To observe genuine obedience to God when practicing the commandmentsis something only very few can do, and proves difficult even for those who have attained a state of self-mastery.

19. According to St Paul, it is characteristic of the Spirit of life to act and speak in the heart, while a literal,outwardly correct observance of things characterizes the Men unregenerate person (cf Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:6). TheSpirit of life frees the intellect from sin and death, whereas a literal, outwardly correct observance imperceptiblyturns us into Pharisees, since we then act only in an external bodily

sense and practice the commandments merely in order to be seen doing so (cf Matt. 23:5).

20. The whole complex of the commandments united and knit together m the Spirit (cf. Eph. 4:16) has itsanalogue in man, whether his state is perfect or imperfect. The commandments are the body. The virtues -established inner qualities - are the bones. Grace is the soul that lives and vivifies, energizing me

vital power of thecommandments just as the soul animates the body. The degree of negligence or diligence with which a man tries toattain to Christ's stature reveals what stage he has reached. Alike in this world and in the next, it indicates whetherhe is in his spiritual infancy or has achieved maturity.

21. If you want the body of me commandments to nourish, you must zealously desire the pure spiritual milk ofmaternal grace (cf. 1 Pet. 2:2); for it is on this milk of grace that you must suckle yourself if you wish to increase

your stature in Christ. Wisdom yields fervor from her breasts as milk that helps you to grow; but to nourish theperfect she gives them the honey other purifying joy. 'Honey and milk are under your tongue' (Song of Songs 4:11):by 'milk' Solomon means the Spirit's nurturing and maturing power, while by 'honey' he means the Spirit'spurificatory power. St Paul likewise refers to the differing functions of these powers when he says, 'I have fed you aslittle children with milk, and not with meat' (cf. 1 Cor. 3:2).

22. To try to discover the meaning of the commandments through study and reading without actually living inaccordance with them is like mistaking the shadow of something for its reality. It is only by participating in the tmththat you can share in the meaning of truth. If you search for the meaning without participating in the truth andwithout having been initiated into it, you will find only a besotted kind of wisdom (cf. 1 Cor. 1:20). You will beamong those whom St Jude categorized as 'psychic' or worldly because they lack the Spirit (cf Jude 19), boast asthey may of their knowledge of the truth.

23. The physical eye perceives the outward or literal sense of things and from it derives sensory images. Theintellect, once purified and reestablished in its pristine state, perceives God and from Him derives divine images.Instead of a book the intellect has the Spirit; instead of a pen, mind and tongue - 'my tongue is a pen', says mePsalmist (cf. Ps. 45:1); and instead of ink, light. So plunging the mind into the light that it becomes light, theintellect, guided by the Spirit, inscribes the

inner meaning of things in the pure hearts of those who listen. Then it grasps the significance of the statement thatthe faithful 'shall be taught by God' (cf. Isa. 54:13; John 6:45), and that through the Spirit God 'teaches manknowledge' (Ps. 94:10).

24. The efficacy of the commandments depends on faith working directly in the heart. Through faith eachcommandment kindles and activates the soul's illumination. The fruits of a true and effective faith are self-controland love, its consummation God-given humility, the source and support of love.

25. A right view of created things depends upon a truly spiritual knowledge of visible and invisible realities.Visible realities are objects perceived by the senses, while invisible realities are noetic, intelligent, intelligible anddivine.

25. Orthodoxy may be defined as the clear perception and grasp of the two dogmas of the faith, namely, theTrinity and the Duality. It is to know and contemplate the three Persons of the Trinity as distinctively and mdivisiblyconstituting the one God, and the divine and human natures of Christ as united in His single Person - that is to say,to know and profess that the single Son, both prior and subsequent to the Incarnation, is to be glorified in twonatures, divine and human, and in two wills, divme and human, the one distinct from the other.

27. Three unaltering and changeless properties typify the Holy Trinity: unbegottenness, begottenness andprocession. The Father is unbegotten and unonginate; the Son is begotten and also unoriginate; the Holy Spirit

proceeds from the Father through the Son, as St John of Damaskos says, and is equaUy coetemal.

28. Grace-imbued faith energized by the Spirit through our keeping of the commandments, alone suffices forsalvation, provided we sustain it and do not opt for a dead and ineffectual faith rather than for a living effective faithin Christ. To embody and give life to an effective faith in Christ all we need to do as believers. But nowadays wewho call ourselves orthodox believers have in our ignorance imbibed not the faith imbued with grace but a faith thatis merely a matter of words, dead and unfeeling.

29. The Trinity is simple unity, unqualified and uncompounded. It is three-in-one, for God is three-personed, eachperson wholly

interpenetrating the others without any loss of distinct personal identity.

30. God reveals and manifests Himself in all things in a threefold manner. In Himself He is undetermined; butthrough the Son in the Holy Spirit He sustains and watches over all things. And wherever He expresses Himself,none of the three Persons is manifest or to be perceived apart from or without the other two.

31. In man there is intellect, consciousness and spirit. There is neither intellect without consciousness norconsciousness without spirit: each subsists in the others and in itself. Intellect expresses itself through consciousnessand consciousness is manifested through the spirit In this way man is a dim image of the ineffable and archetypalTrinity, disclosing even now the divine image in which he is created.

32. When the divine fathers expound the doctrine of the supra-essential, holy and supernatural Trinity, theyillustrate it by saying that the Father truly corresponds to the intellect, the Son to consciousness and the Holy Spiritto the spirit. Thus they bequeath to us the dogma of one God in three Persons as the hallmark of the true faith andthe anchor of hope. For, according to Scripture, to apprehend the one God is the root of immortality, and to know themajesty of the three-personed Monad is complete righteousness (cf Wisd. 15:3). Again, we should read what is saidin the Gospel in the same way: eternal life is to know Thee the only true God in three Persons, and Him whom Thouhast sent, Jesus Christ, in two natures and two wills (cf John 17:3).

33. Chastisements differ, as do the rewards of the righteous. Chastisements are inflicted in hell, in what Scripturedescribes as 'a dark and gloomy land, a land of eternal darkness' (Job 10:21-22. LXX), where sinners dwell beforethe judgment and whither they return after judgment is given. For can the phrases, 'Let sinners be returned to hell'(Ps. 9:17. LXX), and 'death will rule over them' (Ps. 49:14. LXX), refer to anything other than the final judgmentvisited upon sinners, and their eternal condemnation?

34. Fire, darkness, the worm and the nether world correspond to ubiquitous self-

indulgence, total tenebrificignorance, all-pervasive, lecherous titivation, and the tearfulness and foul stench of sin. Already even now they canbe seen to be active, as foretastes and first fruits of hell's torments, in sinners in whose soul they have taken root.

35. Passion-embroiled states are foretastes of hell's torments, just[V4]219

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as the activity of the virtues is a foretaste of the kingdom of heaven. We must realize that the commandments areactivities producing effects, and that virtues are states, just as vices that have taken root are also states.

36. Requitals correspond to our deserts, even if many people think they do not. To some, divine justice giveseternal life; to others, eternal chastisement. Each will be requited according to his actions -according to whether hehas passed through this present life in a virtuous or in a sinful manner. The degree or quality of the requital willaccord with the state induced in each by either the passions or the virtues, and the differing effects these have had.

37. Lakes of fire (cf. Rev. 19:20) signify self-indulgent souls. In these lakes the stench of the passions, like fetidbogs, nourishes the sleepless worm of dissipation - the unbridled lusts of the flesh - as it also nourishes the snakes,frogs and leeches of evil desire, the loathsome and poisonous thoughts and demons. A soul in such a state already inthis life receives a foretaste of the chastisement to come.

38. As the firsttruits of future chastisement are secretly present in the souls of sinners, so the foretaste of futureblessings is present and experienced in the hearts of the righteous through the activity of the Spirit. For a life livedvirtuously is the kingdom of heaven, just as a passion-embroiled state is hell.

39. The coming night of which Christ speaks (cf John 9:4) is the complete inertia of hell's darkness. Or,interpreted differently, it is antichrist, who is, and is called, both night and darkness. Or alternatively, according tothe moral sense, it is our daily negligence which, like a dark night, deadens the soul in insensate sleep. For just asthe night makes all men sleep and is the image of the lifelessness of death, so the night of hell's darkness deadensand stupefies sinners with the

sottishness of pain.

40. Judgment upon this world (cf. John 12:31) is synonymous with ungodly lack of faith; for 'he who lacks faith isalready judged' (John 3:18). It is also a providential visitation restraining us or turning us back from sm, andlikewise a way of testing whether by inner disposition we incline towards good or evil actions; for according to thePsalmist, 'The wicked are estranged from the womb' (Ps. 58:3). Thus God manifests His judgment either because ofour lack of faith, or to discipline us. or to test which way our actions gravitate. Some He chastens, to others He ismerciful; on some He bestows

crowns of glory, others He visits with the torments of hell. Those whom He chastens are the utterly godless.Those to whom He shows mercy possess faith, but at the same time they are negligent, and it is for this reason thatthey are compassionately chastised. Those consummate either in virtue or in wickedness receive their rewardsaccordingly.

41. If our human nature is not kept pure or else restored to its original purity by the Holy Spirit, it cannot becomeone body and one spirit in Christ, either in this life or in the harmonious order of the life to come. For the all-embracing and unifying power of the Spirit does not complete the new garment of grace by sewing on to it a patchtaken from the old garment of the passions (cf. Matt. 9:16).

42. Every person who has been renewed in the Spirit and has preserved this gift will be transformed and embodiedin Christ, experiencing ineffably the supernatural state of deification. But he will not hereafter be one with Christ orbe engrafted into His body unless in this life he has come to share in divine grace and has embodied spiritualknowledge and truth.

43. The kingdom of heaven is like the tabernacle which was built by God, and which He disclosed to Moses as apattern (cf. Exod. 25:40); for it too has an outer and an inner sanctuary. Into the first will enter all who are priests ofgrace. But into the second - which is noetic - will enter only those who in this life have

attained the divine darknessof theological wisdom and there as true hierarchs have celebrated the triadic liturgy, entering into the tabernacle thatJesus Himself has set up, where He acts as their consecrator and chief Hierarch before the Trinity, and illuminesthem ever more richly with His own splendor.

44. By 'many dwelling-places' (John 14:2) the Savior meant the differing stages of spiritual ascent and states ofdevelopment in the other world; for although the kingdom of heaven is one, there are many different levels within it.That is to say, there is place for both heavenly and earthy men (cf. 1 Cor. 15:48) according to their virtue, theirknowledge and the degree of deification that they have attained. 'For there is one glory of the sun, and another gloryof the moon, and another glory of the stars, for one star differs from another star in

glory' (1 Cor. 15:41); and yet all of them shine in a single divine firmament.

45. You partake of angelic life and attain an incorruptible and hence almost bodiless state when you have cleansedyour intellect through tears, have through the power of the Spirit resurrected your soul even in this life, and with thehelp of the Logos have made your flesh - your natural human form of clay - a resplendent and fiery image of divinebeauty. For bodies become incorruptible when rid of their natural humors and their material density.

46. The body in its incorruptible state will be earthy, but it will be without humors or material density,indescribably transmuted from an unspintual body into a spiritual body (cf. 1 Cor. 15:44), so that it will be in itsgodlike refinement and subtleness both earthy and heavenly. Its state when it is resurrected will be the same as thatin which it was originally created - one in which it conforms to the image of the Son of Man (cf. Rom. 8:29; Phil.

3:21) through fuU participation in His divinity.

47. The land of the gentle (of. Ps. 37:11) is the kingdom of heaven. Or else it is the theandnc state of the Son,which we have attained or are in the process of attaining, having through grace been reborn as sons of God into thenew life of

the resurrection. Or again, the holy land is our human nature when it has been divinized or, it may be, theland purified according to the measure of those dwelling in it. Or, according to another interpretation, it is the landgranted as an inheritance (cf. Numb. 34:13) to those who are truly saints, the untroubled and divine serenity and thepeace that transcends the intellect (cf. Phil. 4:7) - the land wherein the righteous dwell quietly and unmolested.

48. The promised land is dispassion, from which spiritual joy flows like milk and honey (cf. Exod. 13:5).

49. The saints in heaven hold inner converse together, communicating mystically through the power of the HolySpirit.

50. If we do not know what we are like when God makes us, we shall not realize what sin has turned us into.

51. All who have received the fullness of the perfection of Christ in this life are of equal spiritual stature.

52. Rewards correspond to labors. But their quantity or quality -that is to say, their measure - will be shown by theposition and state in heaven of those who receive them.

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53. According to Scripture the saints, the sons of Christ's resurrection, through incorruption and deification willbecome intellects, that is to say, equal to the angels (cf Luke 20:36).

54. It is said that in the life to come the angels and saints ever increase in gifts of grace and never abate theirlonging for further blessings. No lapse or veering from virtue to vice takes place in that life.

55. A person is perfect in this life when as a pledge of what is to come he receives the grace to assimilate himselfto the various stages of Christ's life. In the life to come perfection is made manifest through the power of deification.

56. If by passing through the different stages of spiritual growth you become perfect in virtue during this life, youwill attain a state of deification in the life hereafter equal to that of your peers.

57. It is said that true belief is knowledge or contemplation of the Holy Spirit. It is also said that scrupulousdiscernment in matters of dogma constitutes full knowledge of the true faith.

58. Rapture means the total elevation of the soul's powers towards the majesty of divine glory, disclosed as anundivided unity. Or again rapture is a pure and all-embracing ascent towards the limitless power that dwells in light.Ecstasy is not only the heavenward ravishing of the soul's powers; it is also complete transcendence of the sense-world itself. Intense longing for God - there are two forms of it - is a spiritual intoxication that arouses our desire.

59. As just remarked, there are two main forms of ecstatic longing for God: one within the heart and the other anenravishment taking one beyond oneself. The first pertains to those who are still in the process of achieving

illumination, the second to those perfected in love. Both, acting on the intellect, transport it beyond the sense-world.Such longing for the divine is truly a spiritual intoxication, impelling natural thoughts towards higher states anddetaching the senses from their involvement with visible things.

60. The source and ground of our distractive thoughts is the fragmented state of our memory. The memory wasoriginally simple and one-pointed, but as a result of the fall its natural powers have been perverted: it has lost itsrecollectedness in God and has become compound instead of simple, diversified instead of one-pointed.

61. We recover the original state of our memory by restoring it to[V4] 223

its primal simplicity, when it will no longer act as a source of evil and destructive thoughts. For Adam'sdisobedience has not only deformed into a weapon of evil the soul's simple memory of what is good; it has alsocorrupted all its powers and quenched its natural appetite for virtue. The memory is restored

above all by constantmindfulness of God consolidated through prayer, for this spiritually elevates the memory from a natural to asupernatural state.

62. Sinful acts provoke passions, the passions provoke distractive thoughts, and distractive thoughts provokefantasies. The fragmented memory begets a multiplicity of ideas, forgetfulness causes the fragmentation of thememory, ignorance leads to forgetfulness, and laziness to ignorance. Laziness is spawned by lustful appetites,appetites are aroused by misdirected emotions, and misdirected emotions by committing sinful acts. A sinful act isprovoked by a mindless desire for evil and a strong attachment to the senses and to sensory things.

63. Distractive thoughts arise and are activated in the soul's intelligent faculty, violent passions in the incensivefaculty, the memory of bestial appetites in the desiring faculty, imaginary forms in the mind, and ideas in theconceptualizing faculty.

64. The irruption of evil thoughts is like the current of a river. We are provoked to sin by such thoughts, and whenas a result of this we give our assent to sin our heart is overwhelmed as though by a turbulent flood.

65. By the 'deep mire' (Ps. 69:2) understand slimy sensual pleasure, or the sludge of lechery, or the burden ofmaterial things. Weighed down by all this the impassioned intellect casts itself into the depths of despair.

66. Scripture often calls thoughts motives for actions, just as it also calls these motives mental images and,conversely, calls mental images motives. This is because the point of departure for such actions, although in itselfimmaterial, is embodied through them and changed into a particular visible form. Thus the sin that is provoked isidentified and named according to its external manifestation.

67. Distractive thoughts are the promptings of the demons and precursors of the passions, just as such promptingsand mental images are also the precursors of particular actions. There can be no action, either for good or evil, that isnot initially provoked by the particular thought of that action; for thought is the impulse.

non-visible in form, that provokes us to act at all, whatever the action may be.

68. The raw material of actions generates neutral thoughts, while demonic provocation begets evil thoughts. Thuswhen they are compared it is clear that there is a difference between motives and thoughts that accord with natureand those which are either Contrary to nature or supernatural.

69. Thoughts in different classes of people are equally prone to change, thoughts that accord with naturebecoming either thoughts contrary to nature or, alternatively, becoming thoughts that transcend nature. Occasionsfor these changes are provided, in the case of evil-minded people, by thoughts suggested by material things; whereasin the case of those who are materially-minded they are provided by demonic provocation. Similarly, in the case ofsaints, it is thoughts that accord with nature that provide the occasion for this change, such thoughts generatingthoughts that transcend nature. For the motivating occasions and grounds for these changes of the various types ofthought into their congenerate types are fourfold: material, demonic, natural and supernatural.

70. Occasions give rise to distractive thoughts, thoughts to fantasies, fantasies to the passions, and the passionsgive entry to the demons. It is as if there were a certain cunningly devised sequence and order among the disorderedspirits, one thing following and derived from another. But no one thing in the sequence is self-operative: each isprompted and activated by the demons. Fantasy is not wrought into an image, passion is not energized, withoutunperceived hidden demonic impulsion. For even though Satan has fallen and is shattered, he is still stronger thanwe are and exults over us because of our sloth.

71. The demons fill our minds with images; or, rather, they clothe themselves in images that correspond to thecharacter of the most dominant and active passion in our soul, and in this way they provoke us to give our assent tothat passion. For the demons use the state of passion as an occasion for stirring up images. Thus, whether we areawake or asleep, they visit us with varied and diverse imaginings. The demons of desire turn themselves sometimesinto pigs, sometimes into donkeys, sometimes into fiery stallions avid for copulation, and sometimes - particularlythe demons of licentiousness - into Israelites. The demons of wrath turn themselves sometimes into gentiles andsometimes into lions. The demons of

cowardice take on the form

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of Ishmaelites, those of licentiousness the form of Idumaeans, and those of drunkenness and dissipation the formof Hagarenes. The demons of greed appear sometimes as wolves and sometimes as leopards, those of malice assume

the form sometimes of snakes, sometimes of vipers, and sometimes of foxes, those of shamelessness the form ofdogs and those of listlessness the form of cats. FinaUy there are the demons of lechery, that turn sometimes intosnakes and sometimes into crows and jackdaws. Carnal-minded demons, particularly those dwelling in the air,transform themselves into birds. Our fantasy transmutes the images of the demons in a threefold mannercorresponding to the tripartite nature of the soul: into birds, wild animals and domestic animals, that correspondrespectively to the desiring, mcensive and intelligent aspect of the soul. For the three princes of the passions arealways ready to wage war on these three powers of the soul. Whatever the passion that dominates the soul, theyassume a form that corresponds to it and thus they insinuate themselves into us.

72. The demons of sensual pleasure often attack us in the form of fire and coals. For the spirits of self-indulgencekindle the soul's desiring faculty, while they also confuse the intelligence and plunge it into darkness. The chiefcause of lustful burning and mental confusion and beclouding lies in the sensuality of the passions.

73. The night of the passions is the darkness of ignorance. Or alternatively the night is the state which begets thepassions, where the prince of darkness rules, and where the beasts of the field, the birds of the air and the creepingthings of the earth have their dwelling, these being allegorical terms for the roving spirits that seek to lay hold of usin order to devour us (cf Ps. 104:20).

74. Some distractive thoughts precede the activity of the passions and others follow it. Such thoughts precedefantasies, while passions are sequent to fantasies. The passions precede demons, while demons follow the passions.

75. The cause and origin of the passions is the misuse of things. Such misuse results from perversion of ourcharacter. Perversion expresses the bias of the will, and the state of our will is tested by demonic provocation. Thedemons thus are permitted by divine providence to demonstrate to us the specific state of our will.

76. The lethal poison of the sting of sin is the soul's passion-charged state. For if by your own free choice youallow yourself to be

dominated by the passions you will develop a firm and unchanging propensity to sin.

77. The passions are variously named. They are divided into those pertaining to the body and those pertaining tothe soul. The bodily passions are subdivided into those that involve suffering and those that are sinful. The passionsthat induce suffering are further subdivided into those connected with disease and those connected with correctivediscipline. The passions pertaining to the soul are divided according to whether they affect the incensive, appetitiveor intelligent aspect of the soul. Those connected with the intelligence are subdivided into those affecting theimagination and those affecting the understanding. Of these some are the result of the deliberate misuse of things;others we suffer against our will, out of necessity, and for these we are not culpable. The fathers have also calledthem concomitants and natural idiosyncrasies.

78. The passions that pertain to the body differ from those that pertain to the soul; those affecting the appetitive

faculty differ from those affecting the incensive faculty; and those of the intelligence differ from those of theintellect and the reason. But all intercommunicate, and all collaborate, the bodily passions with those of theappetitive faculty, passions of the soul with those of the incensive faculty, passions of the intelligence with those ofthe intellect, and passions of the intellect with those of the reason and of the memory.

79. The passions of the incensive faculty are anger, animosity, shouting, bad

temper, self-assertion, conceit,boastfulness, and so on. The passions of the appetitive faculty are greed, licentiousness, dissipation, insatiateness,self-indulgence, avarice and self-love, which is the worst of all. The passions of the flesh are unchastity, adultery,uncleanliness, profligacy, injustice, gluttony, listlessness, ostentation, self-adornment, cowardice and so on. Thepassions of the intelligence are lack of faith, blasphemy, malice, cunning, mquisitiveness, duplicity, abuse,backbiting, censonousness, vilification, frivolous talk, hypocrisy, lying, foul talk, foolish chatter, deceitfulness,sarcasm, self-display, love of popularity, day-dreaming, perjury, gossiping and so on. The passions of the intellectare self-conceit, pomposity, arrogance, quarrelsomeness, envy, self-satisfaction, contentiousness, inattentiveness,fantasy, fabrication, swaggering, vainglory and pride, the beginning and end of all the vices. The passions of thereason are dithering, distraction, captivation, obfuscation, blindness, abduction,

provocation, connivance in sin, bias, perversion, instability of mind and similar things. In short, all the unnaturalvices commingle with the three faculties of the soul, just as all the virtues naturally coexist within them.

80. How eloquent is David when he speaks to God in ecstasy, saying, 'Thy knowledge is too wonderful for me; Icannot attain to it' (cf. Ps. 139:6), for it exceeds my feeble knowledge and my powers. How incomprehensible,indeed, is even this flesh in the way it has been constituted: it too is triadic in every detail, and yet a single harmonyembraces its limbs and parts; in addition it is graced by the numbers seven and two which, according tomathematicians, signify time and creation. Thus it, too, when perceived according to the laws at work in creation, isto be seen as an organ of God's glory manifesting His triadic magnificence.

81. The laws of creation are the qualities inventing wholes compounded of energized parts - qualities also knownas generic differences, since they invest many different composites constituted from identical properties. Or gainthe natural law is the potential power to energize inherent in each species and in each part. As God does with respectto the whole of creation, so does the soul

with respect to the body: it energizes and impels each member of the bodyin accordance with the energy intrinsic to that member. At this point it must be asked why the holy fatherssometimes say that anger and desire are powers pertaining to the body and sometimes that they are powerspertaining to the soul. Assuredly, the words of the saints never disagree if they are carefully examined. In this case,both statements are true, if correctly understood in context. For indescribably body and soul are brought into beingin such a way that they coexist. The soul is in a state of perfection from the start, but the body is imperfect since ithas to grow through taking nourishment. The soul by virtue of its creation as a deifonn and intellective entitypossesses an intrinsic power of desire and an intrinsic mcensive power, and these lead it to manifest both courage

and divine love. For senseless anger and mindless desire were not created along with the soul. Nor originally didthey pertain to the body. On the contrary, when the body was created it was free from corruption and without thehumors from which such desire and uncontrollable rage arise. But after the fall anger and desire were necessarilygenerated within it, for then it became subject to the corruption and gross materiality of the instinct-driven

animals. That is why when the body has the upper hand it opposes the will of the soul through anger and desire.But when what is mortal is made subject to the intelligence it assists the soul in doing what is good. For whencharacteristics that do not originally pertain to the body but have subsequently infiltrated into it become entangledwith the soul, man becomes like an animal (cf Ps. 49:20), since he is now necessarily subject to the law of sin. Heceases to be an intelligent human being and becomes beast-like.

82. When God through His life-giving breath created the soul deiform and intellective. He did not implant in itanger and desire that are animal-like. But He did endow it with a power of longing and aspiration, as well as with acourage responsive to divine love. Similarly when God formed the body He did not originally implant in itinstinctual anger and desire. It was only afterwards,

through the fall, that it was invested with these characteristicsthat have rendered it mortal, corruptible and animal-like. For the body, even though susceptive of corruption, wascreated, as theologians will tell us, free from corruption, and that is how it will be resurrected. In the same way thesoul when originally created was dispassionate. But soul and body have both been denied, commingled as they arethrough the natural law of mutual mterpenetration and exchange. The soul has acquired the qualities of the passionsor, rather, of the demons; and the body, passing under the sway of corruption because of its fallen state, has becomeakin to instinct-driven animals. The powers of body and soul have merged together and have produced a singleanimal, driven impulsively and mindlessly by anger and desire. That is how man has sunk to the level of animals, asScripture testifies, and has become like them in every respect (cf. Ps. 49:20).

83. The principle and source of the virtues is a good disposition of the will, that is to say, an aspiration forgoodness and beauty. God is the source and ground of all supernal goodness. Thus the principle of goodness andbeauty is faith or, rather, it is Christ, the rock of faith, who is principle and foundation of all the virtues. On this rockwe stand and on this foundation we build every good thing (cf. 1 Cor. 3:11). Christ is the capstone (cf Eph. 2:20)uniting us with Himself. He is the pearl of great price (c£ Matt. 13:46): it is this for which the monk seeks when heplunges into the depths of stillness and it is this for which he sells all his own desires through obedience to thecommandments, so that he may acquire it even in this life.

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84. The virtues are all equal and together reduce themselves to one, thus constituting a single principle and formof virtue. But some virtues - such as divine love, humility and divine patience - are greater than others, embracingand comprising as they do a large number or even all of the rest. With regard to patience the Lord says, 'You willgain possession of your souls through your patient endurance' (Luke 21:19). He did not say 'through your fasting' or'through

your vigils'. I refer to the patience bestowed by God, which is the queen of virtues, the foundation ofcourageous actions. It is patience that is peace amid strife, serenity amid distress, and a steadfast base for those whoacquire it. Once you have attained it with the help of Christ Jesus, no swords and spears, no attacking armies, noteven the ranks of demons, the dark phalanx of hostile powers, will be able to do you any harm.

85. The virtues, though they beget each other, yet have their origin in the three powers of the soul - all exceptthose virtues that are divine. For the ground and principle of the four cardinal virtues, both natural and divine -sound understanding, courage, self-restraint and justice, the progenitors of all the other virtues - is the divineWisdom that inspires those who have attained a state of mystical prayer. This Wisdom operates in a fourfold mannerin the intellect. It activates not all the four virtues simultaneously, but each one individually, as is appropriate and asit determines. It activates sound understanding in the form of light, courage as clear-sighted power and ever-movinginspiration, self-restraint as a power of sanctification and purification, and justice as the dew of purity, joy-inducingand cooling the arid heat of the passions. In every one who has attained the state of perfection it activates each virtuefully, in the appropriate form.

86. The pursuit of the virtues through one's own efforts does not confer complete strength on the soul unless gracetransforms them into an essential inner disposition. Each virtue is endowed with its own specific gift of grace, itsown particular energy, and thus possesses the capacity to produce such a disposition and blessed state in those whoattain it even when they have not consciously sought for any such state. Once a virtue has been bestowed on us itremains unchanged and unfailing. For just as a living soul activates the body's members, so the grace of the HolySpirit activates the virtues. Without such grace the whole bevy of the virtues is moribund; and m those who appearto have attained them, or to be in the way of attaining them, solely through

their own efforts they are but shadows and prefigurations of beauty, not the

reality itself.

87. The cardinal virtues are four: courage, sound understanding, self-restraint and justice. There are eight othermoral qualities, that either go beyond or fall short of these virtues. These we regard as vices, and so we call them;but non-spiritual people regard them as virtues and that is what they call them. Exceeding or falling short of courageare audacity and cowardice, of sound understanding are cunning and ignorance; of self-restraint are licentiousnessand obtuseness; of justice are excess and injustice, or taking less than one's due. In between, and superior to, what

goes beyond or what falls short of them, lie not only the cardinal and natural virtues, but also the practical virtues.These are consolidated by resolution combined with probity of character; the others by perversion and self-conceit.That the virtues lie along the midpoint or axis of rectitude is testified to by the proverb, 'You will attain every well-founded axis' (Prov. 2:9. LXX). Thus when they are all established in the soul's three faculties in which they arebegotten and built up, they have as their foundation the four cardinal virtues or, rather, Christ Himself. In this waythe natural virtues are purified through the practical virtues, while the divine and supra-natural virtues are conferredthrough the bounty of the Holy Spirit.

88. Among the virtues some are practical, others are natural, and others are divine and conferred by the HolySpirit. The practical virtues are the products of our resolution, the natural virtues are built into us when we arecreated, the divine virtues are the fruits of grace.

89. Just as the virtues are begotten in the soul, so are the passions. But the virtues are begotten in accordance withnature, the passions in a mode contrary to nature. For what produces good or evil in the soul is the will's bias: it islike the joint of a pair of compasses or the pivot of a pair of scales: whichever way it inclines, so it will determinethe consequences. For our inner disposition is capable of operating in one way or another, since it bears within itselfboth virtue and vice, the first as its natural birthright, the second as the result of the self-incurred proclivity of ourmoral will.

90. Scripture calls the virtues 'maidens' (cf Song of Songs 1:3) because through their close union with the soulthey become one with it in spirit and body. In the same way as a girl's beauty is emblematic of her love, the presenceof these holy

virtues expresses our inner purity and saintliness. Grace habitually gives to divine things an outwardform

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that accords with their inner nature, at the same time unerringly molding those receptive to it in a way thatcorresponds to this nature.

91. There are eight ruling passions: gluttony, avarice and self-esteem - the three principal passions; andunchastity, anger, dejection, listlessness and arrogance - the five subordinate passions. In the same way, among thevirtues opposed to these there are three that are all-embracing, namely, total shedding of possessions, self-controland humility, and five deriving from them, namely, purity, gentleness, joy, courage, and self-belittlement - and thencome all the other virtues. To study and recognize the power, action and special flavor of each virtue and vice is notwithin the competence of everyone who wishes to do so; it is the prerogative of those who practice and experiencethe virtues actively and consciously and who receive from the Holy Spirit the gifts of cognitive insight anddiscrimination.

92. Virtues either energize in us or are energized by us. They energize in us by being present in us when it isappropriate, when they will, for as long as they will and in whatever manner they will. We energize them ourselves

according to our resolve and the moral state of our capabilities. But they energize in us by virtue of their ownessence, whereas we energize them merely in an imitative way, by modeling our moral conduct upon them. For allour actions are but typifications of the divine archetypes; and few indeed are those who participate concretely innoetic realities before they enjoy the eternal blessings of the life to come. In this life we mainly activate and makeour own not the virtues themselves but their reflections and the ascetic toil they require.

93. According to St Paul (cf Rom. 15:16), you 'minister' the Gospel only when, having yourself participated inthe light of Christ, you can pass it on actively to others. Then you sow the Logos like a divine seed in the fields ofyour listeners' souls. 'Let your speech be always filled with grace', says St Paul (Col. 4:6),

'seasoned' with divinegoodness. Then it will impart grace to those who listen to you with faith. Elsewhere St Paul, calling the teacherstillers and their pupils the fields they till (cf 2 Tim. 2:6), wisely presents the former as plowers and sowers of thedivine Logos and the latter as the fertile soil, yielding a rich crop of virtues. True ministry is not simply a celebrationof sacred rites; it also involves participation in divine blessings and the communication of these blessings to others.

94. Oral teaching for the guidance of others has many forms,[V4] 232

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varying in accordance with the diverse ways in which it is put together from different sources. These sources arefour in number: instruction, reading, ascetic practice, and grace. For just as water, while essentially the same,changes and acquires a distinctive quality according to the composition of the soil under it, so that it tastes bitter, orsweet, or brackish, or acidic, so oral teaching, colored as it is by the moral state of the teacher, varies accordingly inthe way it operates and in the benefits it confers.

95. Oral teaching is something to be enjoyed by all intelligent beings. But just as there are many different kinds offood, so the recipient of this teaching experiences its pleasure in a variety of ways. Instruction moulds the moralcharacter; teaching by reading is like 'still waters' that nourish and restore the soul (cf Ps. 23:2); teaching throughascetic practice is like 'green pastures', strengthening it (cf. Ps. 23:2); while teaching imparted through grace is like acup that intoxicates it (cf. Ps. 23:5. LXX), filling it with unspeakable joy, or else it is like oil that exhilarates the faceand makes it radiant (cf. Ps. 104:15).

96. Strictly speaking the soul possesses these various forms of teachings within itself as part of its own life; butwhen it learns about them through listening to others it becomes conscious of them, provided it listens with faith andprovided the teacher teaches with love, speaking of the virtues without vanity or self-esteem. Then the soul isdisciplined by instruction, nourished by reading, graciously escorted to her wedding by the deeply-rooted teachingthat derives from ascetic practice, and receives the illuminative teaching of the Holy Spirit as a bridegroom whounites her to Himself and fills her with delight. 'Every word

that proceeds out of the mouth of God' (Matt. 4:4)denotes the words that, inspired by the Holy Spirit, issue from the mouths of the saints - an inspiration granted not toall but only to those who are worthy. For although all intelligent beings take pleasure in knowledge, very few arethose in this world who are consciously filled with joy by the wisdom of the Spirit; most of us only know and

participate through the power of memory in die images and reflections of spiritual wisdom, for we do not yet withfull awareness partake of the Logos of God, the true celestial bread. But in the life to come this bread is the sole foodof me saints, proffered in such abundance that it is never exhausted, depleted, or immolated anew.

97. Without spiritual perception you cannot consciously[V4] 233

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experience the delight of divine things. If you dull your physical senses you make them insensible to sensorythings, and you neither see, hear nor smell, but are paralyzed or, rather, half-dead; similarly, if through the passionsyou deaden the natural powers of your soul you make them insensible to the activity of the mysteries of the Spiritand you cannot participate in them. If you are spiritually blind, deaf and insensible you are as dead: Christ does notlive in you, and you do not live and act in Christ.

98. The physical senses and the soul's powers have an equal and similar, not to say identical, mode of operation,especially when they are in a healthy state: far then the soul's powers live and act through the senses, and the life-giving Spirit sustains them both. A man is truly ill when he succumbs to the generic malady of the passions andspends his whole time in the sickroom of inertia. When there is no satanic battle between them, making them rejectthe rule of the intellect and of the Spirit, the senses clearly perceive sensory things, the soul's powers mtelligiblethings; for when they are united through the Spirit and constitute a single whole, they know directly and essentiallythe nature of divine and human things. They contemplate with clarity the logoi, or inward essences of these things,and distinctly perceive, so far as is possible, the single source of all things, the Holy Trinity.

99. He who practices hesychasm must acquire the following five virtues, as a foundation on which to build:silence, self-control, vigilance, humility and patience. Then there are three practices blessed by God: psalmody,prayer and reading - and handiwork for those weak in body. These virtues which we have listed not only embrace allthe rest but also consolidate each other. From early morning the hesychast must devote himself to the remembranceof God through prayer and stillness of heart, praying diligently in the first hour, reading in the second, chantingpsalms in the third, praying in the fourth, reading in the fifth, chanting psalms in the sixth, praying in the seventh,reading in the eighth, chanting psalms in the ninth, eating in the tenth, sleeping in the eleventh, if need be, andreciting vespers in the twelfth hour. Thus fruitfully spending the course of the day he gains God's blessings.

100. Like a bee one should extract from each of the virtues what is most profitable. In this way, by taking a smallamount from all of them, one builds up from the practice of the virtues a great honeycomb overflowing with thesoul-delighting honey of wisdom.

101. Now hear, if you will, how it is best to spend the night. For the

night vigil there are three programs: for beginners, for those midway on the path, and for the perfect. The firstprogram is as follows: to sleep half the night and to keep vigil for the other half, either from evening till midnight orfrom midnight till dawn. The second is to keep vigil after nightfall for one or two hours, then to sleep for four hours,then to rise for matins and to chant psalms and pray for six hours until daybreak, then to chant the first hour, andafter that to sit down and practice stillness, in the way already described. Then one can either follow the program ofspiritual work given for the daylight hours, or else continue in unbroken prayer, which gives a greater inner stability.The third program is to stand and keep vigil uninterruptedly throughout the night.

102. Now let us say something about food. A pound of bread is sufficient for anyone aspiring to attain the state ofinner stillness. You may drink two cups of

undiluted wine and three of water. Your food should consist of whateveris at hand - not whatever your natural craving seeks, but what providence provides, to be eaten sparingly. The bestand shortest guiding rule for those who wish to live as they should is to maintain the threefold all-embracingpractices of fasting, vigilance and prayer, for these provide a most powerful support for all the other virtues.

103. Stillness requires above all faith, patience, love with all one's heart and strength and might (cf. Deut. 6:5),and hope. For if you have faith, even though because of negligence or some other fault you fail to attain what youseek in this life, you will on leaving this life most certainly be vouchsafed the fruit of faith and spiritual struggle andwill behold your liberation, which is Jesus Christ, the redemption and salvation of souls, the Logos who is both Godand man. But if you lack faith, you will certainly be condemned on leaving this world. In fact, as the Lord says, youare condemned already (cf. John 3:18). For if you are a slave to sensual pleasure, and want to be honored by otherpeople rather than by God (cf. John 5:44.), you lack faith, even though you may profess faith verbally; and youdeceive yourself without realizing it. And you will incur the rebuke: 'Because you did not receive Me in your heartbut cast Me out behind your back, I too will reject you' (ef Ezek. 5:11). If you possess faith you should have hope,and believe in God's truth to which the whole of Scripture bears witness, and confess your own weakness; otherwiseyou will inescapably receive double condemnation.

104. Nothing so fills the heart with contrition and humbles the soul as solitude embraced with self-awareness, andutter silence. And nothing so destroys the state of inner stillness and takes away the divine power that comes from itas the following six universal passions: insolence, gluttony, talkativeness, distraction, pretentiousness and themistress of the passions, self-conceit. Whoever commits himself to these passions plunges himself progressively into

darkness until he becomes completely insensate. But if he comes to himself again and with faith and ardor makes afresh start, he will once more attain what he seeks, especially if he seeks it with humility. Yet if through hisnegligence

even one of the passions that we have mentioned gets a hold on him once more, then the whole host ofevils, including pernicious lack of faith, moves in and attacks him, devastating his soul till it becomes like anothercity of Babylon, full of diabolical turmoil and confusion (cf. Isa. 13:21). Then the last state of the person to whomthis happens is worse than his first (cf. Matt. 12:45), and he turns into a violent enemy and defamer of thosepursuing the path of hesychasm, always whetting his tongue against them like a sharp double-edged sword.

105. Once the waters of the passions, like a turbid and chaotic sea, have flooded the soul's state of stillness, thereis no way of crossing over them except in the light swift-winged barque of self-control and total poverty. For whenbecause of our dissipation and enslavement to materiality the torrents of the passions inundate the soil of the heart,they deposit there all the filth and sludge of evil thoughts, befouling the intellect, muddying the reason, clogging thebody, and slackening, darkening and deadening soul and heart, depriving them of their natural stability andresponsiveness.

106. Nothing so makes the soul of those striving to advance on the spiritual path sluggish, apathetic and mindlessas self-love, that pimp of the passions. For whenever it induces us to choose bodily ease rather than virtue-promoting hardship, or to regard it as positive good sense not willingly to burden ourselves with ascetic labor,especially with respect to the light exertions involved in practicing the commandments, then it causes the soul torelax its efforts to attain a state of stillness, and produces in it a strong, irresistible sense of indolence and slackness.

107. If you are feeble in practicing the commandments yet want to expel your inner murkiness, the best and mostefficient physic is

trustful unhesitating obedience in all things. This remedy, distilled 'from many virtues, restores vitality and acts as aknife which at a single stroke cuts away festering sores. If, then, in total trust and simplicity you choose this remedyout of all alternatives you excise every passion at once. Not only will you reach the

state of stillness but also throughyour obedience you will fully enter into it, having found Christ and become His imitator and servitor in name andact.

108. Unless your life and actions are accompanied by a sense of inner grief you cannot endure the incandescenceof stillness. If with this sense of grief you meditate - before they come to pass - on the many terrors that await usprior to and after death you will achieve both patience and humility, the twin foundations of stillness. Without themyour efforts to attain stillness will always be accompanied by apathy and self-conceit. From these will arise a host ofdistractions and day-dreams, all inducing sluggishness. In their wake comes dissipation, daughter of indolence,making the body sluggish and slack and the intellect benighted and callous. Then Jesus is hidden, concealed by thethrong of thoughts and images that crowd the mind (cf. John 5:13).

109. The torments of conscience in this life or the life to come are experienced with full awareness not byeveryone but only by those who in this world or the next are deprived of divine glory and love. Such torment is likea fearful torturer punishing the guilty in various ways, or like a sharp sword striking with pitiless indignation andreproach. Once our conscience is active, what some call righteous indignation and others natural wrath is roused inthree ways - against the demons, against our nature and against our own soul; for such indignation or wrath impelsus to sharpen our conscience like a keen-bladed sword against our enemies. If this righteous indignation triumphsand subjects sin and our unregenerate self to the soul, then it is transmuted into the loftiest courage and leads us toGod. But if the soul enslaves itself to sin and our unregenerate self, then this righteous indignation turns against itand torments it mercilessly, for it has enslaved itself to its enemies by its own free will. Thus enslaved, the soulcommits terrible crimes, for its state of virtue is lost and it has alienated itself from God.

110. Of all the passions, lechery and listlessness are especially harsh and burdensome, for they oppress anddebilitate the unhappy soul. And as they are inter-related and intertwined they are difficult to fight against and toovercome - in fact by our own efforts alone we cannot

defeat them. Lechery burgeons in the soul's appetitive aspect and by nature embraces indiscriminately both souland body, since the total pleasure it generates spreads through all our members. Listlessness, once it has laid hold ofour intellect and like bindweed has enlaced our soul and body, makes us slothful, enfeebled and indolent. Evenbefore we have attained the blessed state of dispassion these two passions are expelled, though not finally defeated,whenever through prayer our soul receives from the Holy Spirit a power that releases it from tension, producingstrength and profound peace in the heart, and solacing us with stillness. Lechery is the pleasure that includes allother forms of sensual indulgence, their source, mistress and queen; and its crony, sloth, is the invincible chariotbearing Pharaoh's captains (cf. Exod. 14:7). Through these two - lechery and sloth - the seeds of the passions aresown in our unhappy lives.

111. Noetic prayer is an activity initiated by the cleansing power of the Spirit and the mystical rites celebrated bythe intellect. Similarly, stillness is initiated by attentive waiting upon God, its intermediate stage is characterized byilluminative power and contemplation, and its final goal is ecstasy and the enraptured flight of the intellect towardsGod.

112. Prior to the enjoyment of the blessings that transcend the intellect, and as a foretaste of that enjoyment, thenoetic activity of the intellect mystically offers up the Lamb of God upon the altar of the soul and partakes of Him incommunion. To eat the Lamb of God upon the soul's noetic altar is not simply to apprehend Him spiritually or toparticipate in Him; it is also to become an image of the Lamb as He is in the age to come. Now we experience themanifest expression of the mysteries; hereafter we hope to enjoy their very substance.

113. For beginners prayer is like a joyous fire kindled in the heart; for the perfect it is like a vigorous sweet-scented light. Or again, prayer is the preaching of the Apostles, an action of faith or, rather, faith itself, 'that makes

real for us the things for which we hope' (Heb. 11:1), active love, angelic impulse, the power of the bodiless spirits,their work and delight, the Gospel of God, the heart's assurance, hope of salvation, a sign of purity, a token ofholiness, knowledge of God, baptism made manifest, purification in the water of regeneration, a pledge of the HolySpirit, the exultation of Jesus, the soul's

delight, God's mercy, a sign of reconciliation, the seal of Christ, a ray of thenoetic sun, the heart's dawn-star, the confirmation of the Christian

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faith, the disclosure of reconciliation with God, God's grace, God's wisdom or, rather, the origin of true andabsolute Wisdom; the revelation of God, the work of monks, the life of hesychasts, the source of stillness, andexpression of the angelic state. Why say more? Prayer is God, who accomplishes everything in everyone (cf 1 Cor.12:6), for there is a single action of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, activating all things through Christ Jesus.

114. Had Moses not received the rod of power from God, he would not have become a god to Pharaoh (cf. Exod.7:1) and a scourge both to him and to Egypt. Correspondingly the intellect, if it fails to grasp the power of prayer,will not be able to shatter sin and the hostile forces ranged against it.

115. Those who say or do anything without humility are like people who build in winter or without bricks andmortar. Very few acquire humility and know it through experience; and those who try to talk about it are like peoplemeasuring a bottomless pit. And I who in my blindness have formed a faint image of this great light am rash enoughto say this about it: tme humility does not consist in speaking humbly, or in looking humble. The humble persondoes not have to force himself to think humbly, nor does he keep finding fault with himself. Such conduct mayprovide us with an occasion for humility or constitute its outward form, but humility itself is a grace and a divinegift. The holy fathers teach that there are two kinds of humility: to regard oneself as lower than everyone else, and toascribe all one's achievement to God. The first is the beginning, the second the consummation.

Those who seek humility should bear in mind the three following things: that they are the worst of sinners, thatthey are the most despicable of all creatures since their state is an unnatural one, and that they are even more pitiablethan the demons, since they are slaves to the demons. You will also profit if you say this to yourself: how do I knowwhat or how many other people's sins are, or whether

they are greater than or equal to my own? In our ignoranceyou and I, my soul, are worse than all men, we are dust and ashes under their feet. How can I not regard myself asmore despicable than all other creatures, for they act in accordance with the nature they have been given, while I,owing to my innumerable sins, am in a state contrary to nature. Truly animals are more pure than I, sinner that I am;on account of this I am the lowest of all, since even before my death I have made my bed in

hell. Who is not fully aware that the person who sins is worse than the demons, since he is their thrall and theirslave, even in this life sharing their murk-mantled prison? If I am mastered by the demons I must be inferior to them.Therefore my lot will be with them in the abyss of hell, pitiful that I am. You on earth who even before your deathdwell in that abyss, how do you dare delude yourself, calling yourself righteous, when through the evil you havedone you have defiled yourself and made yourself a sinner and a demon? Woe to your self-deception and yourdelusion, squalid cur that you are, consigned to fire and darkness for these offences.

116. According to theologians, noetic, pure, angelic prayer is in its power wisdom inspired by the Holy Spirit. Asign that you have attained such prayer is that the intellect's vision when praying is completely free from form andthat the intellect sees neither itself nor anything else in a material way. On the contrary, it is often drawn away evenfrom its own senses by the light acting within it; for it now grows immaterial and filled with spiritual radiance,becoming through ineffable union a single spirit with God (cf. 1 Cor. 6:17).

117. We are led and guided towards God-given humility by seven different qualities, each of which generates andcomplements the others: silence, humbleness in thought, in speech, in appearance, self-reproach, contrition andlooking on oneself as the least of men. Silence consciously espoused gives birth to humbleness in thought. Humble-ness in thought produces three further

modes of humility, namely, humbleness in speech, bearing oneself in a simpleand humble way, and constant self-belittlement. These three modes give birth to contrition; this arises within uswhen God allows us to suffer temptations - when, that is, we are disciplined by providence and humbled by thedemons. Contrition readily induces the soul to feel the lowest and least of all, and the servant of all. Contrition andlooking on oneself as the least of all bring about the perfect humility that is the gift of God, a power rightly regardedas the perfection of all the virtues. It is a state in which one ascribes all one's achievements to God. Thus the firstfactor leading to humility is silence, from which humbleness of thought is bom. This gives birth to the three furthermodes of humility. These three generate the single quality of contrition. The quality of contrition gives birth to theseventh mode, the primal humility of regarding oneself as the least of men, which is also' called providentialhumility. Providential humility confers the true and God-given humility that is

perfect and indescribable. Primal humility comes thus: when you are abandoned, overcome, enslaved anddominated by every passion, distractive thought and evil spirit, and can find no help in doing good works, or in God,or in anything at all, so that you are ready to fall into despair, then you are humbled in everything, are filled withcontrition and regard yourself as the lowest and least of all things, the slave of all, and worse even than the demons,since you are dominated and vanquished by them. This is providential humility. Once acquired, through it Godbestows the ultimate humility. This is a divine power that activates and accomplishes all things. With its aid a man

always sees himself as an instrument of divine power, and through it he accomplishes the miraculous works of God.

118. Because we are now mastered by the passions and succumb to a host of temptations we cannot in our ageattain those states that characterize sanctity -1 mean real spiritual contemplation of the divine light, an intellect freefrom fantasy and distraction, the true energy of prayer ceaselessly flowing from the depths of the heart, the soul'sresurrection and ascension, divine rapture, the

soaring beyond the limits of this world, the mind's ecstasy in spiritabove all things sensory, the ravishment of the intellect above even its own powers, the angelic flight of the soulimpelled by God towards what is infinite and utterly sublime. The intellect - especially in the more superficialamong us - tends to picture these states prematurely to itself, and in this way it loses even the slight stability God hasgiven it and becomes altogether moribund. Hence we must exercise great discrimination and not try to pre-emptthings that come in their own good time, or reject what we already possess and dream of something else. For bynature the intellect readily invents fantasies and illusions about the high spiritual states it has not yet attained, andthus there is no small danger that we may lose what has already been given to us and destroy our mind throughrepeated self-deception, becoming a day-dreamer and not a hesychast.

119. Faith, like active prayer, is a grace. For prayer, when activated by love through the power of the Spirit,renders true faith manifest - the faith that reveals the life of Jesus. If, then, you are aware that such faith is not atwork within you, that means your faith is dead and lifeless. In fact you should not even speak of yourself as one ofthe 'faithful' if your faith is merely theoretical and is not actualized by the practice of the commandments or by theSpirit. Thus faith must be

evidenced by progress in keeping the commandments, or it must be actualized and translucent in what we do.This is confirmed by St James when he says, 'Show me your faith through your works and I will show you the worksthat I do through my faith' (cf Jas. 2:18). In saying this he makes it clear that grace-inspired faith is evidenced bythe keeping of the commandments, just as the commandments are actualized and made translucent by grace-inspiredfaith. Faith is the root of the commandments or, rather, it is the spring that feeds their growth. It has two aspects -that of confession and that of grace - though it is essentially one and indivisible.

120. The short ladder of spiritual progress - which is at the same time both small and great - has five rangs leadingto perfection. The first is renunciation, the

second submission to a religious way of life, the third obedience tospiritual direction, the fourth humility, and the fifth God-imbued love. Renunciation raises the prisoner from hell andsets him free from enslavement to material things. Submission is the discovery of Christ and the decision to serveHim. As Christ Himself said, 'He who serves Me, follows Me; and where I am he who serves Me will also be' (cf.John 12:26). And where is Christ? In heaven, enthroned at the right hand of the Father. Thus he who serves Christmust be in heaven as well, his foot placed ready to climb up; indeed, before he even begins to ascend by his ownefforts he is already raised up and ascending with Christ. Obedience, put into action through the practice of thecommandments, builds a ladder out of various virtues and places them in the soul as rungs by which to ascend (cf.

Ps. 84:5. LXX). Thence the spiritual aspirant is embraced by humihty, the great exaher, and is borne heavenwardsand dehvered over to love, the queen of the virtues. By love he is led to Christ and brought into His presence. Thusby this short ladder he who is truly obedient swiftly ascends to heaven.

121. The quickest way to ascend to the kingdom of heaven by the short ladder of the virtues is through effacingthe five passions hostile to obedience, namely, disobedience, contentiousness, self-gratification, self-justificationand pernicious self-conceit. For these are the limbs and organs of the recalcitrant demon that devours those whooffer false obedience and consigns them to the dragon of the abyss. Disobedience is the mouth of hell;contentiousness its tongue, whetted like a sword; self-gratification its sharp teeth; self-justification its gullet; andself-conceit, that sends one to hell, is the vent that evacuates its

all-devouring belly. If through obedience you overcome the first of these - disobedience - you cut off all the restat a stroke, and with a single swift stride attain heaven. This is the truly ineffable and inconceivable miracle wroughtby our compassionate Lord: that through a single virtue or, rather, a single commandment, we can ascendstraightway to heaven, just as through a single act of disobedience we have descended and continue to descend intohell.

122. Man is like another or second world - a new world, as he is called by St Paul when he states, 'Whoever is inChrist is a new creation' (2 Cor. 5:17). For through virtue man becomes a heaven and an earth and everything that aworld is. Every quality and mystery exists for man's sake, as St Gregory of Nazianzos says. Moreover, if, as St Paulaffirms, our struggle is not against creatures of flesh and blood, but against the potentates and rulers of the darknessof this world, against the spirits of evil in the celestial realms of the prince of the air (cf. Eph. 2:2; 6:12), it followsthat those who secretly fight against us inhabit the world of our psychic powers, which is like another great world ofnature. For the three princes that oppose us in our struggle attack the three powers of the soul; and it is preciselywhere we have made progress, and in areas that we have labored to develop, that they launch their assault.

Thus the dragon, the prince of the abyss, whose strength is manifest in the loins and the belly - organs of oursoul's appetitive power - sallies forth against those who strive to keep their attention in their hearts; and through thelust-loving giant of forgetfulness he hurls at them the whole battery of his fiery darts (cf. Eph. 6:16). Desire beingfor him like another sea and abyss, he plunges into it, coils his way through it, and stirs it up, making it foam andboil. In this way he inflames it with sexual longing and inundates it with sensual pleasure; but this does not slake it,for it is insatiable.

The prince of this world (cf. John 12:31), who campaigns against the soul's incensive power, attacks those strivingto attain practical virtue. With the help of the giant of sloth, he continually ranges his forces against us and engagesus in a spiritual contest with every trick of passion he can devise. As though in the theatre or stadium of some otherworld, he wrestles with all who stand up against him with

courage and endurance; sometimes he wins, sometimes he is defeated, and so he either disgraces us or gains uscrowns of glory in the sight of the angels.

The prince of the air (cf. Eph. 2:2) attacks those whose minds are absorbed in

contemplation, deluding them withfantasies; for supported by the evil spirits of the air he attacks the soul's intellectual and spiritual power. Through thegiant of ignorance he clouds the aspiring mind as though it were an intellectual heaven, disrupting its composure,craftily insinuating into it vague fantastic images of evil spirits and their metamorphoses, and producing fear-inspiring similitudes of thunder and lightning, tempests and alarums. These three princes, assisted by the threegiants, attack the three powers of our soul, each waging war against the particular power that corresponds to him.

123. These demons were once celestial intelligences; but, having fallen from their original state of immaterialityand refinement, each of them has acquired a certain material grossness, assuming a bodily form corresponding to thekind of action allotted to it. For like human beings they have lost the delights of the angels and have been deprivedof divine bliss, and so they too, like us, now find pleasure in earthly things, becoming to a certain extent materialbecause of the disposition to material passions which they have acquired. We should not be surprised at this, for ourown soul, created intellectual and spiritual in the image of God, has become bestial, insensate and virtually mindlessthrough losing the knowledge of God and finding pleasure in material things. Inner disposition changes outwardnature, and acts of moral choice alter the way that nature functions. Some evil spirits are material, gross,uncontrollable, passionate and vindictive. They hunger for material pleasure and indulgence as carnivores for flesh.Like savage dogs and like those possessed they devour and relish rotten food; and their delight and habitation arecoarse, fleshy bodies. Others are licentious and slimy. They creep about in the pool of desire like leeches, frogs andsnakes. Sometimes they assume the form of fish, delighting in their brackish lubricity. Slippery and flaccid, theyswim in the sea of drunkenness, rejoicing in the humectation of mindless pleasures. In this manner they constantlystir up waves of impure thoughts, and storms and tempests in the soul. Others are light and subtle, since they areaerial spirits, and agitate the soul's contemplative power, provoking strong winds and fantasies. They deceive thesoul by

appearing sometimes in the form of birds or angels. They fill one's memory with

the forms of people one knows.

They pervert and deform the contemplative vision of those pursuing the path of hohness who have not yet attainedthe state of purity and inner discrimination; for there is nothing spiritual but that they can secretly transformthemselves into it in the imagination. They too arm themselves according to our spiritual state and degree ofprogress, and substituting illusion for truth and fantasy for contemplation they take up their abode within us. It is tothese evil spirits that Scripture refers when it speaks of beasts of the field, birds of the air and things that creep onthe ground (cf. Hos. 2:18).

124. There are five ways in which the passions may be aroused in us and our fallen self may wage war against oursoul. Sometimes our fallen self misuses things. Sometimes it seeks to do what is unnatural as though it were natural.Sometimes it forms warm friendship with the demons and they provide it with arms against the soul. Sometimesunder the influence of the passions it falls into a state of civil war, divided against itself. Finally, if the demons havefailed to achieve their purpose in any of the ways just mentioned. God may permit them in their malice to wage waragainst us in order to teach us greater humility.

125. The main causes of warfare - arising in us through every kind of object or situation - are three: our innerdisposition, the misuse of created things and, by God's leave, the malice and onslaught of the demons. As the fallenself rises in protest against the soul, and the soul against the fallen self (cf Gal. 5:17), so in the same way our innerdisposition and our mode of acting make the passions of the fallen self war against the soul, and the valiant powersof the soul wage war against the fallen self. And sometimes our enemy, shameless as he is, has the audacity to fightagainst us in his own person, without cause or warning. Thus, my friend, do not let this blood-loving leech bleedyour arteries, and then spit out the blood he has sucked from you. Do not glut the snake and the dragon, and thenyou will easily trample on the insolence of the lion and the dragon (cf Ps. 91:13). Lament until you have strippedoff the passions and clothed yourself in your heavenly dwelling-place (cf. 2 Cor. 5:2), and are refashioned accordingto the likeness of Jesus Christ, who made you in His image (cf. Col. 3:10).

126. Those completely given over to the pursuits of the flesh and[V4] 245

full of self-love are always slaves to sensual pleasure and to vanity. Envy, too, is rooted in them. Consumed bymalice and embittered by their neighbor's blessings, they calumniate good as bad, calling it the fruit of deceit. Theydo not accept things of the Spirit or believe in them; and because of their lack of faith they cannot see or know God.Such people, due to this same blindness and lack of faith, on the last day will justly hear spoken to them the words, Tknow you not' (Matt. 25:12). For the questing believer must either believe when he hears what he does not know, orcome to know what he believes; and he must teach to others what he has come to know and abundantly multiply thetalent entrusted to him. But if he disbelieves what he does not know, and vilifies what he does not understand, andteaches what he has not learnt, envying those who teach things from practical experience, his lot will surely be tosuffer punishment with those consumed by 'the gall of bitterness' (Acts 8:23).

127. According to the wise, a true teacher is he who through his all-embracing cognitive insight comprehends

created things concisely, as if they constituted a single body, establishing distinctions and connections between themaccording to their generic difference and identity, so as to indicate which possess similar qualities. Or he may bedescribed as one who can truly demonstrate things apodictically. Or again, a true spiritual teacher is he whodistinguishes and relates the general and universal qualities of created things - classified as five in number, butcompounded in the incarnate Logos - in accordance with a particular formulation that embraces everything. But hisapodictic skill is not a matter of mere verbal dexterity, like that of profane philosophers, for he is able to enlightenothers through the contemplative vision of created things manifested to him by the Holy Spirit.

A true philosopher is one who perceives in created things their spiritual Cause, or who knows created thingsthrough knowing their Cause, having attained a union with God that transcends the intellect and a direct, unmediatedfaith: He does not simply learn about divine things, but actually experiences them. Or again, a true philosopher isone whose intellect is conversant equally with ascetic practice and contemplative wisdom. Thus the perfectphilosopher or lover of wisdom is one whose intellect has attained - alike on the moral, natural and theologicallevels - love of wisdom or, rather, love of God. That is to say, he has learnt from God the principles of asceticpractice (moral philosophy), an insight

into the spiritual causes of created things

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(natural philosophy), and a precise contemplative understanding of doctrinal principles (theology).

Or again, a teacher initiated into things divine is one who distinguishes principial beings from participative beingsor beings that have no autonomous self-subsistent reality; he adduces the essences of principial beings from beingsthat exist through participating in them, and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, he perceives the essences of principialbeings embodied in participative beings. In other words, he interprets what is intelligible and invisible in terms ofwhat is sensible and visible, and the visible sense-world in terms of the invisible and supersensory world, consciousthat what is visible is an image of what is invisible, and that what is invisible is the archetype of what is visible. Heknows that things possessing form and figure are brought into being by what is formless and without figure, and thateach manifests the other spiritually; and he clearly perceives each in the other and conveys this perception in histeaching of the truth. His knowledge of the truth, with all its sun-like radiance, is not expressed in anagogical orallegorical form; on the contrary, he elucidates the true underlying principles of both worlds with spiritual insightand power, and expounds them forcibly and vividly. In this way the visible world becomes our teacher and theinvisible world is shown to be an eternal divine dwelling-place manifestly brought into being for our sake.

A divine philosopher is he who through ascetic purification and noetic contemplation has achieved a direct unionwith God, and is a true friend of God, in that he esteems and loves the supreme, creative and true wisdom aboveevery other love, wisdom and knowledge. A student of spiritual knowledge, though not properly speaking aphilosopher (even though reflected wisdom has unnoticed appropriated the name of philosophy, as St Gregory ofNazianzos points out) is he who esteems and studies God's wisdom mirrored in His creation, down to the leastvestige of it; but he does this without any self-display or any hankering after human praise and glory, for he wishes

to be a lover of God's wisdom in creation and not a lover of materialism.

An interpreter of sacred texts adept in the mysteries of the kingdom of God is everyone who after practicing theascetic life devotes himself to the contemplation of God and cleaves to stillness. Out of the treasury of his heart hebrings forth things new and old (cf. Matt. 13:52), that is, things from the Gospel of Christ and the Prophets, or fromthe New and Old Testaments, or doctrinal teachings and rules of

ascetic practice, or themes from the Apostles and from the Law. These are the mysteries new and old that theskilled interpreter brings forth when he has been schooled in the life of holiness.

An interpreter is one proficient in the practice of the ascetic life and still actively engaged in scriptural exegesis.A divine teacher is one who mediates, in accordance with the laws governing the natural world, the spiritualknowledge and inner meanings of created things and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, elucidates all things with theanalytic power of his intelligence. A true philosopher is one who has attained, consciously and directly, asupernatural union with God.

128. Those who write and speak and who wish to build up the Church, while lacking the inspiration of the HolySpirit, are 'psychic' or worldly people void of the Spirit, as St Jude observes (cf. Jude 19). Such people come underthe curse which says, 'Woe to those who are wise in their own sight, and esteem themselves as possessors ofknowledge' (Isa. 5:21); for they speak from themselves and it is not the Spirit of God that speaks in them (cf Matt.10:20). For those who speak what are simply their own thoughts before they have attained purity are deluded by thespirit of self-conceit. It is to them that Solomon refers when he says, 'I knew a man who regarded himself as wise;there is more hope for a fool than for him' (Prov. 26:12. LXX); and again, 'Do not be wise in your own sight' (Prov.3:7). St Paul himself, filled with the Spirit, endorses this when he says, 'We are not qualified to form any judgmenton our own account; our qualification comes from God' (2 Cor. 3:5), and, 'As men sent from God, we

speak beforeGod in the grace of Christ' (2 Cor. 2:17). What people say when they speak on their own account is repellent andmurksome, for their words do not come from the living spring of the Spirit, but are spawned from the morass of theirown heart, a bog infested with the leeches, snakes and frogs of desire, delusion and dissipation; the water of theirknowledge is evil-smelling, turbid and torpid, sickening to those who drink it and filling them with nausea anddisgust.

129. 'We are the body of Christ', says St Paul, 'and each of us is one of its members' (cf. 1 Cor. 12:27). Andelsewhere he says, 'You are one body and one spirit, even as you have been called' (Eph. 4:4). For 'as the bodywithout the spirit is dead' (Jas. 2:26) and insensate, so if you have been deadened by the passions through neglectingthe commandments after your baptism the Holy Spirit and the grace of

Christ cease to operate in you and to enlighten you; for though you possess the Spirit, since you have faith andhave been regenerated through baptism, yet the Spirit is quiescent and inactive within you because of the deadnessof your soul.

Although the soul is one and the members of the body are many, the soul sustains them all, giving life andmovement to those that can be animated. Should some of them have withered because of some disease and becomeas if dead and inert, yet they are still sustained by the soul, even in their lifeless and insensate state. Similarly, theSpirit of Christ is present with integral wholeness in all who are members of Christ, activating and generating life inall capable of participating in it; and in His compassion He still sustains even those who through some weakness donot actively participate in the life of the Spirit. In this way each of the faithful participates, by virtue of his faith, inadoption to sonship through the Spirit; but should he grow negligent and fail to sustain his faith he will become inertand benighted, deprived of Christ's life and light. Such is the state of each of the faithful who, though a member ofChrist and possessing the Spirit of Christ, fails to activate this Spirit within himself and so is stagnant, incapable ofparticipating positively in the life of grace.

130. The principal forms of contemplation are eight in number. The first is contemplation of the formless,unongmate and uncreated God, source of all things - that is, contemplation of the one Triadic Deity that transcendsall being. The second is contemplation of the hierarchy and order of the spiritual powers. The third is contemplationof the structure of created beings. The fourth is contemplation of God's descent through the incarnation of the Logos.The fifth is contemplation of the universal resurrection. The sixth is contemplation of the dread second coming ofChrist. The seventh is contemplation of age-long punishment. The eighth is contemplation of the kingdom ofheaven. The first four pertain to what has already been manifested and realized. The second four pertain to what is instore and has not yet been manifested; but they are clearly contemplated by and disclosed to those who throughgrace have attained great purity of intellect. Whoever without such grace attempts to descry them should realize thatfar from attaining spiritual vision he will merely become the prey of fantasies, deceived by and forming illusions inobedience to the spirit of delusion.

131. Here something must be said about delusion, so far as this is[V4] 249

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possible; for, because of its deviousness and the number of ways in which it can ensnare us, few recognize itclearly and for most it is almost inscrutable. Delusion manifests itself or, rather, attacks and invades us in two ways -

in the form of mental images and fantasies or in the form of diabohc influence - though its sole cause and origin isalways arrogance. The first form is the origin of the second and the second is the origin of a third form - mentalderangement. The first form, illusory visions, is caused by self-conceit; for this leads us to invest the divine withsome illusory shape, thus deceiving us through mental images and fantasies. This deception in its turn producesblasphemy as well as the fear induced by monstrous apparitions, occurring both when awake and when asleep - astate described as the terror and perturbation of the soul. Thus arrogance is followed by delusion, delusion byblasphemy, blasphemy by fear, fear by terror, and terror by a derangement of the natural state of the mind. This isthe first form of delusion, that induced by mental images and fantasies.

The second form, induced by diabolic influence, is as follows. It has its origin in

self-indulgence, which in its turnresults from so-called natural desire. Self-indulgence begets licentiousness in all its forms of indescribable impurity.By inflaming man's whole nature and clouding his intelligence as a result of its intercourse with spurious images,licentiousness deranges the intellect, searing it into a state of delirium and impelling its victim to utter falseprophecies, interpreting the visions and discourses of certain supposed saints, which he claims arc revealed to himwhen he is intoxicated and befuddled with passion, his whole character perverted and corrupted by demons. Thoseignorant of spiritual matters, beguiled by delusion, call such men 'little souls'. These 'little souls' are to be foundsitting near the shrines of saints, by whose spirit they claim to be inspired and tested, and whose purported messagethey proclaim to others. But in truth they should be called possessed by the demons, deceived and enslaved bydelusion, and not prophets foretelling what is to happen now and in the future. For the demon of licentiousnesshimself darkens and deranges their minds, inflaming them with the fire of spiritual lust, conjuring up before themthe illusory appearance of saints, and making them hear conversations and see visions. Sometimes the demonsthemselves appear to them and convulse them with fear. For having harnessed them to the yoke of Belial, the demonof licentiousness drives them on

to practice their deceits, so that he may keep them captive and enslaved until death, when he will consign them tohell.

132. Delusion arises in us from three principal sources: arrogance, the envy of demons, and the divine will thatallows us to be tried and corrected. Arrogance arises from superficiality, demonic envy is provoked by our spiritualprogress, and the need for correction is the consequence of our sinful way of life. The delusion arising solely fromenvy and self-conceit is swiftly healed, especially when we humble ourselves. On the other hand, the delusionallowed by God for our correction, when we are handed over to Satan because of our smfulness, God often permitsto continue until our death, if this is needed to efface our sins. Sometimes God hands over even the guiltless to thetorment of demons for the sake of their salvation. One should also know that the demon of self-conceit

himselfprophesies in those who are not scrupulously attentive to their hearts.

133. All the faithful are truly anointed priests and kings in the spiritual renewal brought about through baptism.

just as priests and kings were anointed figuratively in former times. For those anointings were prefigurations of thetruth of our anointing: prefigurations in relation not merely to some of us but to all of us. For our kingship andpriesthood is not of the same form or character as theirs, even though the symbolic actions are the same. Nor doesour anointing recognize any distinction in nature, grace or calling, in such a way that those anointed essentiallydiffer one from the other: we have but one and the same calling, faith and ritual. The true significance of this is thathe who is anointed is pure, dispassionate and wholly consecrated to God now and for ever.

134. If your speech is full of wisdom and you meditate on understanding in your heart (cf Ps. 49:3), you willdisclose in created things the presence of the divine Logos, the substantive Wisdom of God the Father (cf. 1 Cor.1:24); for in created things you will perceive the outward expression of the archetypes that characterize them, andthus through your active living intelligence you will speak wisdom that derives from the divine Wisdom. Andbecause your heart will be illuminated by the power of the transfiguring understanding on which you meditate inyour spirit, you will be able through this understanding to instruct and illuminate those who listen with faith.

135. Today's great enemy of truth, drawing men to perdition, is[V4]251

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delusion. As a result of this delusion, tenebrous ignorance rules the souls of all those sunk in lethargy andalienates them from God. Such people are as if unaware that there exists a God who gives us rebirth andillumination, or they assume that we can believe in Him and know Him only in a theoretical way and not throughour actions, or else they imagine that He has revealed Himself only to the people of former times and not to us also;and they pretend that the scriptural texts about God are applicable only to the original authors, or to others, but not tothemselves. Thus they blaspheme the teaching about God, since

they repudiate true knowledge inspired by devotionto God, and read the Scriptures only in a literal, not to say Judaic, manner; denying the possibility that man even inthis life can be resurrected through the resurrection of his soul, they choose to remain in the grave of ignorance.Delusion consists of three passions: lack of faith, guile and sloth. These generate and support each other: lack offaith sharpens the wits of guile, and guile goes hand in hand with sloth, which expresses itself outwardly in laziness.Or conversely, sloth may beget guile - did not the Lord say, 'You cunning and lazy servant' (Matt. 25:26)? - andguile mothers lack of faith. For if you are full of guile you lack faith, and if you lack faith you stand in no awe ofGod. From such lack of faith comes sloth, which begets contempt; and when you are full of contempt you scorn allgoodness and practice every kind of wickedness.

136. Complete dogmatic orthodoxy consists in a true doctrine about God and an unerring spiritual knowledge ofcreated things. If you are orthodox in this way you should glorify God thus: Glory to Thee, Christ our God, glory toThee, because for our sake Thou, the divine Logos who transcends all things, becamest man. Great is the mysteryof Thine incarnation. Savior: glory to Thee.

137. According to St Maximos the Confessor there are three motives for writing which are above reproach andcensure: to assist one's memory, to help others, or as an act of obedience. It is for the last reason that most spiritual

writings have been composed, at the humble request of those who have need of them. If you write about spiritualmatters simply for pleasure, fame or self-display, you will get your deserts, as Scripture says (cf Matt. 6:5, 16), andwill not profit

from it in this life or gain any reward in the life to come. On the contrary, you will be condemned for courtingpopularity and for fraudulently trafficking in God's wisdom.

St Gregory of SinaiFurther Texts

1. Everyone baptized into Christ should pass progressively through all the stages of Christ's own life, for inbaptism he receives the power so to progress, and through the commandments he can discover and leam how toaccomplish such progression. To Christ's conception corresponds the foretaste of the gift of the Holy Spirit, to Hisnativity the actual experience of joyousness, to His baptism the cleansing force of the fire of the Spirit, to Histransfiguration the contemplation of divine light, to His crucifixion the dying to all things, to His burial theindwelling of divine love in the heart, to His resurrection the soul's life-quickening resurrection, and to Hisascension divine ecstasy and I the transport of the intellect into God. He who fails to pass consciously through thesestages is still callow in body and spirit, even though he may be regarded by all as mature and accomplished in thepractice of virtue.

2. Christ's Passion is a life-quickening death to those who have experienced all its phases, for by experiencingwhat He experienced we are glorified as He is (cf Rom. 8:17). But indulgence in sensual passions induces a trulylethal death. Willingly to experience what Christ experienced is to crucify cracifixion and to put death to death.

3. To suffer for Christ's sake is patiently to endure whatever happens to us. For the envy which the innocentprovoke is for their benefit, while the Lord's schooling tests us so as to bring about our conversion, since it opensour ears when we are guilty. That is why the Lord has promised an eternal crown to those who endure in this manner(cf. Jas. 1:12). Glory to Thee, our God; glory to Thee, Holy Trinity; glory to Thee for all things.

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St Gregory of SinaiFurther Texts

On Passion-Imbued Change

4. Listlessness - a most difficult passion to overcome - makes the body sluggish. And when the body is sluggish,the soul also grows sluggish. When both have become thoroughly lax, self-indulgence induces a change in thebody's temperament. Self-indulgence incites the appetite, appetite gives rise to pernicious desire, desire to the spiritof revolt, revolt to dormant recollections, recollection to imaginings, imagining to mental provocation, provocationto

coupling with the thought provoked, and coupling to assent. Such assent to a diabolic provocation leads to actualsinning, either through the body or in various other ways. Thus we are defeated and thus we lapse.

On Beneficent Change

5. In whatever work we engage patience gives birth to courage, courage to commitment, commitment toperseverance, and perseverance to an increase in the work done. Such additional labor quells the body's dissoluteimpulses and checks the desire for sensual indulgence. Thus checked, desire gives rise to spiritual longing, longingto love, love to aspiration, aspiration to ardor, ardor to self-galvanizing, self-galvanizing to assiduousness,assiduousness to prayer, and prayer to stillness. Stillness gives birth to contemplation, contemplation to spiritualknowledge, and knowledge to the apprehension of the mysteries. The consummation of the mysteries is theology,the fruit of theology is perfect love, of love humility, of humility dispassion, and of dispassion foresight, prophecyand foreknowledge. No one possesses the virtues perfectly in this life, nor does he cut off evil all at once. On thecontrary, by small increases of virtue evil gradually ceases to exist.

On Morbid Defluxions

Question: In how many ways do morbid defluxions take place, whether sinful or sinless?[V4] 255

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Further TextsOn Morbid Defluxions

6. Answer: Sinful defluxions take place in three ways: through fornication, through self-abuse, and throughconsent to pernicious thoughts. Sinless defluxions take place in seven ways: through the urine, through eating solidor stimulating foods, through drinking too much chill water, through the sluggishness of the body, through excessivetiredness, and through all kinds of demonic fantasy. In veterans in the ascetic life they generally take place throughthe first five of the ways we have just mentioned. In those who have attained the state of dispassion, the fluid onlyissues mixed with urine, because on account of their ascetic labors their inner ducts have in some way becomeporous and they have been given the grace of a divine energy, purificatory and sanctifying - the grace of continence.The last form of defluxion - that prompted

by demonic fantasy during sleep - pertains both to those still under thedomination of the passions and to those suffering from weakness. But since this is involuntary it is free from sin, asthe holy fathers tell us.

By divine dispensation the person who has attained the state of dispassion experiences from time to time a sinlesspropulsion, while the remaining fluid is consumed by divine fire. The person still engaged in the ascetic life and sounder various forms of constraint experiences a discharge that is innocuous. The person still under the sway of thepassions experiences a natural discharge and an unnatural discharge, the first prompted by diabolic fantasy duringsleep and the second by diabolic fantasy to which assent has been given while he is awake. The first is innocuous,the second is sinful and liable to penance.

In those who have attained the state of dispassion the propulsion and the bodily discharge constitute a singleaction through which by divine dispensation surplus fluid is expelled through the urine while the rest is consumedby divine fire, as already stated. In those midway along the ascetic path there are said to be six general ways ofinnocuous defluxion through which the body is cleansed and freed from the corruptive fluid formed naturally andunavoidably in it. These are prompted by solid or stimulating foods, by drinking cold water, by sluggishness of thebody, by torpor resulting from excessive labor, and finally by the malice of demons. In the weak and those newlyengaged in the ascetic life there are similarly six ways, all embroiled with the passions. They are prompted bygluttony, by back-biting, by censoriousness, by self-esteem, by demonic fantasy during sleep and

assent to it while awake, and finally by the aggressive malice of demons. Yet even these have in God's providencea double purpose: first, they cleanse human nature from corruption, from the surplus matter it has absorbed, andfrom impulse-driven appetites; and, second, they train the person engaged in the spiritual struggle to be humble andattentive, and to restrain himself in all things and from all things.

7. He who dwells in solitude and depends on charity for his food must accept

alms in seven ways. First, he mustask only for what is needful. Secondly, he must take only what is needful. Thirdly, he must receive whatever isoffered to him as if from God. Fourthly, he must trust in God and believe that He will recompense the giver. Fifthly,he must apply himself to keeping the commandments. Sixthly, he must not misuse what is given to him. Seventhly,he must not be stingy but must give to others and be compassionate. He who conducts himself thus in these mattersexperiences the joy of having his needs supplied not by man but by God.

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On the Signs of Grace and Delusion,Written for the Confessor Longinos: Ten Texts

1. As the great teacher St John Chrysostom states, we should be in a position to say that we need no help from theScriptures, no assistance from other people, but are instructed by God; for 'all will be taught by God' (Isa. 54:13;John 6:45), in such a way that we learn from Him and through Him what we ought to know. And this applies not

only to those of us who are monks but to each and every one of the faithful: we are all of us called to carry the lawof the Spirit written on the tablets of our hearts (cf. 2 Cor. 3:3), and to attain like the Cherubim the supreme privilegeof conversing through pure prayer in the heart directly with Jesus. But because we are infants at the time of ourrenewal through baptism we do not understand the grace and the new life conferred upon us. Unaware of thesurpassing grandeur of the honor and glory in which we share, we fail to realize that we ought to grow in soul andspirit through the keeping of the commandments and so perceive noetically what we have received. On account ofthis most of us fall through indifference and servitude to the passions into a state of benighted obduracy. We do notknow whether God exists, or who we are, or what we have become, although through baptism we have been madesons of God, sons of light, and children and members of Christ. If we are baptized when grown up, we feel that wehave been baptized only in water and not by the Spirit. And even though we have been renewed in the Spirit, webelieve only in a formal, lifeless and ineffectual sense, and we say we are full of doubts.

Hence because we are in fact non-spiritual we live and behave in a non-spiritual manner. Should we repent, weunderstand and practice

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the commandments only in a bodily way and not spiritually. And if after many labors a revelation of grace is inGod's compassion granted to us, we take it for a delusion. Or if we hear from others how grace acts, we arepersuaded by our envy to regard that also as a delusion. Thus we remain corpses until death, failing to live in Christand to be inspired by Him. According to Scripture, even that which we possess will be taken away from us at thetime of our death or our judgment because of our lack of faith and our despair (cf. Matt. 25:29). We do notunderstand that the children must be like the father, that is to say, we are to be made gods by God and spiritual bythe Holy Spirit; for 'that which is bom of the Spirit is spirit' (John 3:6). But we are unregenerate, even though wehave become members of the faith and heavenly, and so the Spirit of God does not dwell within us (cf Gen. 6:3).Because of this the Lord has handed us over to strange afflictions and captivity, and slaughter flourishes, perhapsbecause He wishes to correct evil, or cut it off, or heal it by more powerful remedies.

2. With the help of God, then, who inspires those who declare good tidings (cf. Ps. 68:11. LXX), we must firstexamine how one finds Christ or, rather, how one is found by Him, since we already possess and have received Himthrough baptism in the Spirit: as St Paul says, 'Do you not realize that Jesus Christ dwells within you?' (2 Cor. 13:5).Then we must ask how to advance or, simply, how to retain what we have discovered. The best and shortest courseis for us to give a brief summary of the whole spiritual journey from start to finish, long though it is. Many, indeed,have been so exhausted by their efforts to discover what they were looking for that, on finding the starting-point,they have remained content with this, and have not tried to advance farther. Encountering obstacles and turningaside unawares from the true path, they think that they are on the right track when actually they are veeringprofitlessly off course. Others, on reaching the halfway point of illumination, have then grown slack, wilting beforereaching the end; or they have reverted through their slipshod way of life, and have

become beginners again. Yetothers, on the point of attaining perfection, have grown inattentive and self-conceited, relapsing to the state of thosein the middle way or even of beginners. Beginners, those in the middle way and the perfect have each their

distinctive characteristic: for the first it is activity, for the second illumination, for the third purification andresurrection of the soul.

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On How to DiscoverThe Energy of the Holy Spirit

3. The energy of the Holy Spirit, which we have already mystically received in baptism, is realized in two ways.First - to generalize - this gift is revealed, as St Mark tells us, through arduous and protracted practice of thecommandments: to the degree to which we effectively practice the commandments its radiance is increasinglymanifested in us. Secondly, it is manifested to those under spiritual guidance through the continuous invocation ofthe Lord Jesus, repeated with conscious awareness, that is, through mindfulness of God. In the first way, it isrevealed more slowly, in the second more rapidly, if one diligently and persistently learns how to dig the ground andlocate the gold. Thus if we want to realize and know the truth and not to be led astray, let us seek to possess only theheart-engrafted energy in a way that is totally without shape or form, not trying to contemplate in our imaginationwhat we take to be the figure or similitude of things holy or to see any colors or lights. For in the nature of things thespirit of delusion deceives the intellect through such spurious fantasies, especially at the early stages, in those whoare still inexperienced. On the contrary, let our aim be to make the energy of prayer alone active in our hearts, for itbrings warmth and joy to the intellect, and sets the heart alight with an ineffable love for God and man. It is onaccount of this that humility and contrition flow richly from prayer. For prayer in beginners is the unceasing noeticactivity of the Holy Spirit. To start with it rises like a fire of joy from the heart; in the end it is like light madefragrant by divine energy.

4. There are several signs that the energy of the Holy Spirit is beginning to be

active in those who genuinelyaspire for this to happen and are not just putting God to the test - for, according to the Wisdom of Solomon, Tt isfound by those who do not put it to the test, and manifests itself to those who do not distrust it' (cf. Wisd. 1:2). Insome it appears as awe arising in the heart, in others as a tremulous sense of jubilation, in others as joy, in others asjoy mingled with awe, or as tremulousness mingled with joy, and sometimes it manifests itself

as tears and awe. For the soul is joyous at God's visitation and mercy, but at the same time is in awe andtrepidation at His presence because it is guilty of so many sins. Again, in some the soul at the outset experiences anunutterable sense of contrition and an indescribable pain, like the woman in Scripture who labors to give birth (cf.Rev. 12:2). For the living and active Logos - that is to say, Jesus - penetrates, as the apostle says, to the point atwhich soul separates from body, joints from marrow (cf. Heb. 4:12), so as to expel by force every trace of passionfrom both soul and body. In others it is manifest as an unconquerable love and peace, shown towards all, or as ajoyousness that the fathers have often called exultation - a spiritual force and an impulsion of the living heart that isalso described as a vibration and sighing of the Spirit who makes wordless intercession for us to God (cf. Rom.8:26). Isaiah has also called this the 'waves' of God's righteousness (cf. Isa. 48:18), while the great Ephrem calls it'spurring'. The Lord Himself describes it as 'a spring of water welling up for eternal life' (John 4:14) - He refers tothe Spirit as water - a source that leaps up in the heart and erupts through the ebullience of its power.

5. You should know that there are two kinds of exultation or joyousness: the calm variety (called a vibration orsighing or intercession of the Spirit), and the great exultation of the heart - a leap, bound or jump, the soaring flightof the living heart towards the sphere of the divine. For when the soul has been raised on the wings of divine love bythe Holy Spirit and has been freed from the bonds of the passions, it strives to fly to that higher realm even beforedeath, seeking to

separate itself from its burden. This is also known as a stirring of the spirit - that is to say, aneruption or impulsion - as in the text, 'Jesus was stirred in spirit and, deeply moved. He said, "Where have you laidhim?"' (cf. John 11:34). David the Psalmist indicates the difference between the greater and the lesser exultationwhen he declares that the mountains leap like rams and the little hills like lambs (cf. Ps. 114: 6). He is referring ofcourse to those who are perfect and to beginners, for physical mountains and hills, lacking animal life, do notactually leap about.

6. Divine awe has nothing to do with trepidation - by which I mean, not the tremulousness induced by joy, but thetrepidation induced by wrath or chastisement or the feeling of desertion by God. On the contrary, divine awe isaccompanied by a tremulous sense of

jubilation arising from the prayer of fire that we offer when filled with awe. This awe is not the fear provoked bywrath or punishment, but it is inspired by wisdom, and is also deserted as 'the beginning of wisdom' (Ps. 111:10).Awe may be divided into three kinds, even though the fathers speak only of two: the awe of beginners, that of theperfect, and that provoked by wrath, which should properly be called trepidation, agitation or contrition.

7. There are several kinds of trembling. That of wrath is one, that of joy is another, and that of the soul's incensivepower, when the heart's blood is over-heated, is another, that of old age is another, that of sin or delusion is another,and that of the curse which was laid on the human race because of Cain is another (cf. Gen. 4:11-15). In the early

stages of spiritual warfare, however, it sometimes but not always happens that the trembling induced by joy and thatinduced by sin contend with one another. The first is the tremulous sense of jubilation, when grace refreshes the soulwith great joyfulness accompanied by tears; the second is characterized by a

disordered fervor, stupor and obduracythat consume the soul, inflame the sexual organs, and impel one to assent through the imagination to erotic physicalobscenities.

On the Different Kinds of Energy

8. In every beginner two forms of energy are at work, each affecting the heart in a distinct way. The first comesfrom grace, the second from delusion. St Mark the Ascetic corroborates this when he says that there is a spiritualenergy and a satanic energy, and that the beginner cannot distinguish between them. These energies in their turngenerate three kinds of fervor, the first prompted by grace, the second by delusion or sin, and the third by an excessof blood. This last relates to what St Thalassios the Libyan calls the body's temperament, the balance and concord ofwhich can be achieved by appropriate self-control.

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On the Signs of Grace and Delusion,Written for the Confessor Longinos: Ten Texts

On Divine Energy

9. The energy of grace is the power of spiritual fire that fills the heart with joy and gladness, stabilizes, warms andpurifies the soul, temporarily stills our provocative thoughts, and for a time suspends the body's impulsions. Thesigns and fruits that testify to its authenticity are tears, contrition, humility, self-control, silence, patience, self-effacement and similar qualities, all of which constitute undeniable evidence of its presence.

On Delusion

10. The energy of delusion is the passion for sin, inflaming the soul with thoughts of sensual pleasure andarousing phrenetic desire in the body for intercourse with other bodies. According to St Diadochos it is entirelyamorphous and disordered, inducing a mindless joy, presumption and confusion, accompanied by a mood of ill-defined sterile levity, and fomenting above all the soul's appetitive power with its sensuality. It nourishes itself onpleasure, aided and abetted by the insatiable belly; for through the belly it not only impregnates

and enkindles ourwhole bodily temperament but also acts upon and inflames the soul, drawing it to itself so that little by little thedisposition to self-indulgence expels all grace from the person thus possessed.

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St Gregory of SinaiOn Stillness: Fifteen Texts

Two Ways of Prayer

There are two modes of union or, rather, two ways of entering into the noetic prayer that the Spirit activatesin the heart. For either the intellect, cleaving to the Lord (cf 1 Cor. 6:17), is present in the heart prior to theaction of the prayer; or the prayer itself, progressively quickened in the fire of spiritual joy, draws theintellect along with it or welds it to the invocation of the Lord Jesus and to union with Him. For since theSpirit works in each person as He wishes (cf. 1 Cor. 12:11), one of these two ways we have mentioned willtake precedence in some people, the other in others. Sometimes, as the passions subside through the ceaselessinvocation of Jesus Christ, a divine energy wells up in the heart, and a divine warmth is kindled; for Scripturesays that our God is a fire that consumes the passions (cf. Deut. 4:24; Heb. 12:29). At other times the Spiritdraws the intellect to Himself, confining it to the depths of the heart and restraining it from its usualdistractions. Then it will no longer be led captive from Jerusalem to the Assyrians, but a change for the betterbrings it back from Babylon to Zion, so that it says with the Psalmist, Tt is right to praise Thee, 0 God, inZion, and to Thee shall our vows be rendered in Jerusalem' (Ps. 65:1. LXX), and 'When the Lord broughtback the prisoners to Zion' (Ps. 126:1), and 'Jacob will rejoice and Israel will be glad' (Ps. 53:6). The namesJacob and Israel refer respectively to the ascetically active and to the contemplative intellect which throughascetic labor and with God's help overcomes the passions and through contemplation sees God, so far as ispossible. Then the intellect, as if invited to a rich banquet and replete with divine joy, will sing, 'Thou hastprepared a table before me in the face of the demons and passions that afflict me' (cf. Ps. 23:5).

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2. 'In the morning sow your seed', says Solomon - and by 'seed' is to be understood the seed of prayer - 'and in theevening do not withhold your hand', so

that there may be no break in the continuity of your prayer, no moment whenthrough lack of attention you cease to pray; 'for you do not know which will flourish, this or that' (Eccles. 11:6).Sitting from dawn on a seat about nine inches high, compel your intellect to descend from your head into your heart,and retain it there. Keeping your head forcibly bent downwards, and suffering acute pain in your chest, shouldersand neck, persevere in repeating noetically or in your soul 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy'. Then, since that maybecome constrictive and wearisome, and even galling because of the constant repetition - though this is not becauseyou are constantly eating the one food of the threefold name, for 'those who eat Me', says Scripture, 'will still behungry' (Eccles. 24:21) - let your intellect concentrate on the second half of the prayer and repeat the words 'Son ofGod, have mercy'. You must say this half over and over again and not out of laziness constantly change the words.For plants which are frequently transplanted do not put down roots. Restrain your breathing, so as not to breatheunimpededly; for when you exhale, the air, rising from the heart, beclouds the intellect and ruffles your thinking,keeping the intellect away from the heart. Then the intellect is either enslaved by forgetfulness or induced to give its

attention to all manner of things, insensibly becoming preoccupied with what it should ignore. If you see impure evilthoughts rising up and assuming various forms m your intellect, do not be startled. Even if images of good thingsappear to you, pay no attention to them. But restraining your breathing as much as possible and enclosing yourintellect in your heart, invoke the Lord Jesus continuously and diligently and you will swiftly consume and subduethem, flaying them invisibly with the divine name. For St John Klimakos says, 'With the name of Jesus lash yourenemies, for there is no more powerful weapon in heaven or on earth.'

3. Isaiah the Solitary is one of many who affirm that when praying[V4] 265

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you have to restrain your breath. Another author says that you have to control your uncontrollable intellect,impelled and dispersed as it is by the satanic power which seizes hold of your lax soul because of your negligenceafter baptism, bringing with it other spirits even more evil than itself and thus making your soul's state worse than itwas originally (cf Matt. 12:45). Another writer says that in a monk mindfulness of God ought to take the place ofbreathing, while another

declares that the love of God acts as a brake on his out-breathing. St Symeon the NewTheologian tells us, 'Restrain the drawing-m of breath through your nostrils, so as not to breathe easily': St JohnKlimakos says, 'Let mindfulness of Jesus be united to your breathing, and then you will know the blessings ofstillness.' St Paul affirms that it is not he who lives but Christ in him (cf. Gal. 2:20), activating him and inspiring himwith divine life. And the Lord, taking as an example the blowing of the physical wind, says, 'The Spirit blows whereHe wishes' (John 3:8). For when we were cleansed through baptism we received in seed-like form the foretaste ofthe Spirit (cf. 2 Cor. 1:22) and what St James calls the 'implanted Logos' (Jas. 1:21), embedded and as it wereconsolidated in us through an unparticipable participation; and, while keeping Himself inviolate and undimmished.He deifies us in His superabundant bounty. But then we neglected the commandments, the guardians of grace, andthrough this negligence we again fell into the clutches of the passions, filled with the afflatus of the evil spiritsinstead of the breath of the Holy Spirit. That is why, as the holy fathers explain, we are subject to lassitude andcontinually enervated. For had we laid hold of the Spirit and been purified by Him we would have been enkindledby Him and inspired with divine life, and would speak and think and act in the manner that the Lord indicates whenHe says, 'For it is not you that speak but the Spirit of My Father that speaks in you' (cf. Matt. 10:20). Conversely, ifwe embrace the devil and are mastered by him, we speak and act in the opposite manner.

4. 'When the watchman grows weary,' says St John Klimakos, 'he stands up and prays; then he sits down againand courageously resumes the same task.' Although St John is here referring to the intellect and

is saying that it should behave in this manner when it has learnt how to guard the heart, yet what he says can

apply equally to psalmody. For it is said that when the great Varsanuphios was asked about how one shouldpsalmodize, he replied, 'The Hours and the liturgical Odes are church traditions, rightly given so that concord ismaintained when there are many praying together. But the monks of Sketis do not recite the Hours, nor do they singOdes. On their own they practice manual labor, meditation and a

little prayer. When you stand in prayer, you shouldrepeat the Trisagion and the Lord's Prayer. You should also ask God to deliver you from your fallen selfhood. Donot grow slack in doing this; your mind should be concentrated in prayer all day long.' What St Varsanuphioswanted to make clear is that private meditation is the prayer of the heart, and that to practice 'a little prayer' means tostand and psalmodize. Moreover, St John Khmakos explicitly says that to attain the state of stillness entails first totaldetachment, secondly resolute prayer - this means standing and psalmodizmg - and thirdly, unbroken labor of theheart, that is to say, sitting down to pray in stillness.

Different Ways of Psalmodizing

5. Why do some teach that we should psalmodize a lot, others a little, and others that we should not psalmodize atall but should devote ourselves only to prayer and to physical exertion such as manual labor, prostrations or someother strenuous activity? The explanation is as follows. Those who have found grace through long, arduous practiceof the ascetic life teach others to find it in the same way. They do not believe that there are some who throughcognitive insight and fervent faith have by the mercy of God attained the state of grace in a short time, as St Isaac,for instance, recognizes. Led astray by ignorance and self-conceit they disparage such people, claiming that anythingdifferent from their own experience is delusion and not the operation of grace. They do not know that 'it is easy forGod to enrich

a poor man suddenly' (Eccles. 11:21), and that 'wisdom is the principal thing; therefore acquire wisdom', asProverbs says, referring to grace (4:7). Similarly St Paul is rebuking the disciples of his time who were ignorant ofgrace when he says, 'Do you not realize that Jesus Christ dwells within you, unless you are worthless?' (cf 2 Cor.13:5) - unless, that is to say, you make no progress because of your negligence. Thus in their disbelief and arrogancethey do not acknowledge the exceptional qualities of prayer activated in some people by the Spirit in a special way.

6. Objection: Tell me, if a person fasts, practices self-control, keeps vigils, stands, makes prostrations, grievesinwardly and lives in poverty, is this not

active asceticism? How then do you advocate simply the singing of psalms,yet say that without ascetic labor it is impossible to succeed in prayer? Do not the activities I mention constituteascetic labor?

Answer. If you pray with your lips but your mind wanders, how do you benefit? 'When one builds and anothertears down, what do they gain but toil?' (Eccles. 34:23). As you labor with your body, so you must labor with yourintellect, lest you appear righteous in the body while your heart is filled with every form of injustice and impurity. St

Paul confirms this when he says that if he prays with his tongue - that is, with his hps - his spirit or his voice prays,but his inteUect is unproductive: 'I will pray with my spirit, and I will also pray with my intellect' (cf. 1 Cor. 14:14-15). And he adds, 'I would rather speak five words with my intellect than ten thousand with my tongue' (cf. 1 Cor.14:19). St John Khmakos, too, indicates that St Paul is speaking here about prayer when he says in his chapter onprayer, 'The great practitioner of sublime and perfect prayer says, "I would rather speak five words with myintellect." ' There are many other forms of spiritual work, yet not one in itself is all-sufficient; but prayer of the heart,according to St John Klimakos, is pre-eminent and all-embracing, the source of the virtues and catalyst of allgoodness. 'There is nothing more fearful than the thought of death,' says St Maxnnos, 'or more wonderful thanmindfulness of God,' indicating

the supremacy of this activity. But some do not even wish to know that we can attain a state of active grace in thispresent life, so blinded and weak in faith are they because of their ignorance and obduracy.

7. In my opinion, those who do not psalmodize much act rightly, for it means that they esteem moderation - andaccording to the sages moderation is best in all things. In this way they do not expend all the energy of their soul inascetic labour, thus making the intellect negligent and slack where prayer is concerned. On the contrary, by devotingbut little time to psalmodizmg, they can give most of their time to prayer. On the other hand, when the intellect isexhausted by continuous noetic invocation and intense concentration, it can be given some rest by releasing it fromthe straitness of silent prayer and allowing it to relax in the

amplitude of psalmody. This is an excellent rule, taughtby the wisest men.

8. Those who do not psalmodize at all also act rightly, provided they are well advanced on the spiritual path. Suchpeople have no need to recite psalms; if they have attained the state of illumination, they should cultivate silence,uninterrupted prayer and contemplation. They are united with God and have no need to tear their intellect away fromHim and so to throw it into confusion. As St John Klmiakos says, 'One under monastic obedience falls when hefollows his own will, while the hesychast falls when he is interrupted in his prayer.' For the hesychast commitsadultery in his intellect when he sunders it from its mmdfulness of God: it is as if he were being unfaithful to his truespouse and philandering with trivial matters.

To impart this discipline to others is not always possible. But it can be taught to simple uneducated people whoare under obedience to a spiritual father, for such obedience, thanks to the humility that goes with it, can partake ofevery virtue. Those, however, who are not under this kind of obedience should not be taught it, regardless ofwhether they are unlearned people or educated: they may easily be deluded, because people who are a law untothemselves cannot avoid being conceited, and the natural result of conceit is delusion, as St Isaac says. Yet somepeople, unaware of the harm which will result, counsel anybody they happen to meet to practice this disciplinealone, so that their intellect may grow accustomed to being mindful of God and may come to love it. But this is notpossible, especially for those not under

obedience. For, because of their negligence and arrogance, their intellect is still impure and has not first beencleansed by tears; and so, instead of concentrating on prayer, they are filled with images of shameful thoughts, whilethe unclean spirits in their heart, panic-struck by the invocation of the dread name of the Lord Jesus, howl for thedestruction of the person who scourges them. Thus if you hear about or are taught this discipline, and want topractice it, but are not under spiritual direction you will experience one of two things: you will either force yourselfto persist, in which case you fall into delusion and will fail to attain healing; or you will grow negligent, in whichcase you will never make any progress during your whole life.

9. I will add this from my own small experience. When you sit in stillness, by day or by night, free from randomthoughts and continuously praying to God in humility, you may find that your intellect becomes exhausted throughcalling upon God and that your body and heart begin to feel pain because of the intense concentration with whichyou unceasingly invoke the name of Jesus, with the result that you no longer experience the warmth and joy thatengender ardor and patience in the spiritual aspirant. If this is the case, stand up and psalmodize, either by yourselfor with a disciple who lives with you, or occupy yourself with meditation on some scriptural passage or with theremembrance of death, or with manual labor or with some other thing, or give your attention to reading, preferablystanding up so as to involve your body in the task as well.

When you stand and psalmodize by yourself, recite the Trisagion and then pray in your soul or your intellect,making your intellect pay attention to your heart; and recite two or three psalms and a few penitential troparia butwithout chanting them: as St John Klimakos confirms, people at this stage of spiritual development do not chant. For'the suffering of the heart endured in a spirit of devotion', as St Mark puts it, is sufficient to produce joy in them, andthe warmth of the Spirit is given to them as a source of grace and exultation. After each psalm again pray in yourintellect or soul, keeping your thoughts from wandering, and repeat the Alleluia. This is the order established

by the holy fathers Varsanuphios, Diadochos and others. And as St Basil the Great says, one should vary thepsalms daily to enkindle one's fervor and to prevent the intellect from getting bored with having to recite always thesame things. The intellect should be given freedom and then its fervor will be quickened.' If you stand andpsalmodize with a trusted disciple, let him recite the psalms while you guard yourself, secretly watching your heartand praying. With the help of prayer ignore all images, whether sensory or conceptual, that rise up from the heart.For stillness means the shedding of all thoughts for a time, even those which are divine and engendered by theSpirit; otherwise through giving them our attention because they are good we will lose what is better.

10. So, lover of God, attend with care and intelligence. If while engaged in spiritual work you see a light or a fireoutside you, or a form supposedly of Christ

or of an angel or of someone else, reject it lest you suffer harm. And do

not pay court to images, lest you allow them to stamp themselves on your intellect. For all these things thatexternally and inopportunely assume various guises do so in order to delude your soul. The true beginning of prayeris the warmth of heart that scorifies the passions, fills the soul with joy and delight, and establishes the heart inunwavering love and unhesitating surety. The holy fathers teach that if the heart is in doubt about whether to acceptsomething either sensory or conceptual that enters the soul, then that thing is not from God but has been sent by thedevil. Moreover, if you become aware that your intellect is being enticed by some invisible power either from theoutside or from above, do not trust in that power or let your intellect be so enticed, but immediately force it tocontinue its work. Unceasingly cry out: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy', and do not allow yourself toretain any concept, object, thought or form that is supposedly divine, or any sequence of argument or any color, butconcentrate solely on the pure, simple, formless remembrance of Jesus. Then God, seeing your intellect so strict inguarding itself in every way against the enemy, will Himself bestow pure and unerring vision upon it and will makeit participate in God and share in all other blessings.

What is of God, says St Isaac, comes of itself, without you knowing when it will come. Our natural enemy - thedemon who operates in the seat of our desiring power - gives the spirit-forces various guises in

our imagination. In this way he substitutes his own unruly heat for spiritual warmth, so that the soul is oppressedby this deceit. For spiritual delight he substitutes mindless joy and a muggy sense of pleasure, inducing self-satisfaction and vanity. Thus he tries to conceal himself from those who lack experience and to persuade them totake his delusions for manifestations of spiritual joy. But time, experience and perspicacity will reveal him to thosenot entirely ignorant of his wiles. As the palate discriminates between different kinds of food (cf. Eccles. 36:18,19),so the spiritual sense of taste clearly and unerringly reveals everything as it truly is.

11. 'Since you are engaged in spiritual warfare,' says St John Klimakos, 'you

should read texts concerned withascetic practice. Translating such texts into action makes other reading superfluous.' Read works of the fathersrelated to stillness and prayer, like those of St John Klimakos, St Isaac, St Maxmios, St Neilos, St Hesychios,Philotheos of Sinai, St Symeon the New Theologian and his disciple Stithatos, and whatever else exists of writers ofthis kind. Leave other books for the time being, not because they are to be rejected, but because they do notcontribute to your present purpose, diverting the intellect from prayer by their narrative character. Read by yourself,but not in a pompous voice, or with pretentious eloquence or affected enunciation or melodic delectation, or,insensibly carried away by passion, as if you are wanting to please an audience. Do not read with inordinate avidity,for in all things moderation is best, nor on the other hand in a rough, sluggish or negligent manner. On the contrary,read reverently, gently, steadily, with understanding, and at an even pace, your intellect, your soul and your reasonall engaged. When the intellect is invigorated by such reading, it acquires the strength to pray harder. But if you readin the contrary manner - as I have described it above - you cloud the intellect and make it sluggish and distracted, sothat you develop a headache and grow slack in prayer.

12. Continually take careful note of your inner intention: watch carefully which way it inclines, and discoverwhether it is for God and for the sake of goodness itself and the benefit of your soul that you practice stillness or

psalmodize or read or pray or cultivate some virtue. Otherwise you may unknowingly be ensnared and prove to bean ascetic in outward appearance alone while in your manner of life and

inner intention you are wanting to impress men, and not to conform to God. For the devil's traps are many, and hepersistently and secretly watches the bias of our intention, without most of us being aware of it, strivingimperceptibly to corrupt our labor so that what we do is not done in accordance with God's will. But even if heattacks and assaults you relentlessly and shamelessly, and even if he distracts the bias of your will and makes itwaver in spite of your efforts to prevent it, you will not often be caught out by him so long as you keep yourselfsteadfastly intent on God. If again in spite of your efforts you are

overcome through weakness, you will swiftly beforgiven and praised by Hun who knows our intentions and our hearts. There is, however, one passion - self-esteem- that does not permit a monk to grow in virtue, so that though he engages in ascetic labors in the end he remainsbarren. For whether you are a beginner, or midway along the spiritual path, or have attained the stage of perfection,self-esteem always tries to insinuate itself, and it nullifies your efforts to live a holy life, so that you waste your timein listlessness and day-dreaming.

13.1 have also learnt this from experience, that unless a monk cultivates the following virtues he will never makeprogress: fasting, self-control, keeping vigil, patient endurance, courage, stillness, prayer, silence, inward grief andhumility. These virtues generate and protect each other. Constant fasting withers lust and begets self-control. Self-control enables us to keep vigils, vigils beget patient endurance, endurance courage, courage stillness, stillnessprayer, prayer silence, silence inward grief, and grief begets humility. Or, going in the reverse order, you will findhow daughters give birth to mothers - how, that is to say, humility begets inward grief, and so on. In the realm of thevirtues there is nothing more important than this form of mutual generation. The things opposite to these virtues areobvious to all.

14. Here we should specify the toils and hardships of the ascetic life and explain clearly how we should embarkon each task. We must do this lest someone who coasts along without exerting himself, simply relying on what hehas heard, and who consequently remains barren, should blame us or other writers, alleging that things are not as wehave said. For it is only through travail of heart and bodily toil that the work can properly be carried out. Throughthem the grace of the Holy Spirit is revealed. This is the grace with which we and all Christians are endowed atbaptism but which through neglect of the commandments

has been stifled by the passions. Now through God's ineffable mercy it awaits our repentance, so that at the end ofour life we may not because of our barrenness hear the words 'Take the talent from him', and 'What he thinks he has

will be taken away from him' (of. Matt. 25:28-29), and may not be sent to hell to suffer endlessly in Gehenna. Noactivity, whether bodily or spiritual,

unaccompanied by toil and hardship bears fruit; 'for the kingdom of heaven isentered forcibly,' says the Lord, 'and those who force themselves take possession of it' (Matt. 11:12), where 'forcibly'and 'force' relate to the body's awareness of exertion in all things.

Many for long years may have been preoccupied with the spiritual life without exerting themselves, or may stillbe preoccupied with it m this way; but because they do not assiduously embrace hardships with heartfelt fervor andsense of purpose, and have repudiated the severity of bodily toil, they remain devoid of purity, without a share in theHoly Spirit. Those who practice the spiritual life, but do so carelessly and lazily, may think that they makeconsiderable efforts; but they will never reap any harvest because they have not exerted themselves and basicallyhave never experienced any real tribulation. A witness to this is St John Klimakos, who says, 'However exalted ourway of life may be, it is worthless and bogus if our heart does not suffer.' Sometimes when we fail to exert ourselveswe are in our listlessness carried away by spurious forms of distraction and plunged into darkness, thinking we canfind rest in them when that is impossible. The truth is that we are then bound invisibly by unloosable cords andbecome inert and ineffective in everything we do, for we grow increasingly sluggish, especially if we are beginners.For those who have reached the stage of perfection everything is profitable in moderation. St Ephrem also testifies tothis when he says, 'Persistently suffer hardships in order to avoid the hardship of vain sufferings.' For unless, to usethe prophet's phrase, our loins are exhausted by the weakness induced through the exertions of fasting, and unlesslike a woman in childbirth we are afflicted with pains arising from the constriction of our heart, we will not conceivethe Spirit of salvation in the earth of our heart (cf. Isa. 21:3; 26:18). Instead, all we will have to boast about is themany profitless years we have spent in the wilderness, lazily cultivating stillness and imagining that we are

somebody. At the moment of our death we will all know for certain what is the outcome of our life.

15. No one can learn the art of virtue by himself, though some have taken experience as their teacher. For to acton one's own and not on the advice of those

who have gone before us is overweening presumption - or, rather, itengenders such presumption. If the Son does nothing of His own accord, but does only what the Father has taughtHim (cf John 5:19-20), and the Spirit will not speak of His own accord (cf. John 16:3), who can think he hasattained such heights of virtue that he does not need anyone to initiate him into the mysteries? Such a person isdeluded and out of his mind rather than virtuous. One should therefore listen, to those who have experienced thehardships involved in cultivating the virtues and should cultivate them as they have - that is to say, by severe fasting,painful self-control, steadfast vigils, laborious genuflexions, assiduous standing motionless, constant prayer,unfeigned humility, ceaseless contrition and compunctive sorrow, eloquent silence, as if seasoned with salt (cf. Col.4:6), and by patience in all things. You must not be always relaxing or pray sitting down, before it is the proper timeto do so, or before age or sickness compels you. For, as Scripture says, 'You will nourish yourself on the hardshipsof your practice of the virtues' (cf. Ps. 128:2. LXX); and, 'The kingdom of heaven is entered forcibly' (Matt. 11:12).Hence those who diligently strive day by day to practice the virtues that we have mentioned will with God's helpgather in the harvest at the appropriate time.

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St Gregory of SinaiOn Prayer: Seven Texts

How the Hesychast Should Sit for Prayer and Not Rise Again Too Quickly

1. Sometimes - and most often - you should sit on a stool, because it is more arduous; but sometimes, for a break,you should sit for a while on a mattress. As you sit be patient and assiduous, in accordance with St Paul's precept,'Cleave patiently to prayer' (Col. 4:2). Do not grow discouraged and quickly rise up again because of the strain andeffort needed to keep your intellect concentrated on its inner invocation. It is as the prophet says: 'The birth-pangsare upon me, like those of a woman in travail' (Isa. 21:3). You must bend down and gather your intellect into yourheart - provided it has been opened - and call on the Lord Jesus to help you. Should you feel pain in your shouldersor in your head - as you often will - endure it patiently and fervently, seeking the Lord in your heart. For 'thekingdom of God is entered forcibly, and those who force themselves take possession of it' (Matt. 11:12). With thesewords the Lord truly indicated the persistence and labor needed in this task. Patience and endurance in all thingsinvolve hardship in both body and soul.

How to Say the Prayer

2. Some of the fathers advise us to say the whole prayer, 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy', while othersspecify that we say it in two parts - 'Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy', and then 'Son of God, help me' - because this iseasier, given the immaturity and feebleness of our

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How to Say the Prayer

intellect. For no one on his own account and without the help of the Spirit can mystically invoke the Lord Jesus,for this can be done with purity and in its fullness only with the help of the Holy Spirit (cf. 1 Cor. 12:3). Likechildren who can still speak only falteringly, we are unable by ourselves to articulate the prayer properly. Yet wemust not out of laziness frequently change the words of the invocation, but only do this rarely, so as to ensurecontinuity. Again, some fathers teach that the prayer should be said aloud; others, that it should be said silently withthe intellect. On the basis of my personal experience I recommend both ways. For at times the intellect grows listlessand cannot repeat the prayer, while at other times the same thing happens to the voice. Thus we should pray bothvocally and in the intellect. But when we pray vocally we should speak quietly and calmly and not loudly, so that thevoice does not disturb and hinder the intellect's consciousness and concentration. This is always a danger until the

intellect grows accustomed to its work, makes progress and receives power from the Spirit to pray firmly and withcomplete attention. Then there will be no need to pray aloud - indeed, it will be impossible, for we shall be contentto carry out the whole work with the intellect alone.

How to Master the Intellect in Prayer

3. .No one can master the intellect unless he himself is mastered by the Spirit. For the intellect is uncontrollable,not because it is by nature ever-active, but because through our continual remissness it has been given over todistraction and has become used to that. When we violated the commandments of Him who in baptism regeneratesus we separated ourselves from God and lost our conscious awareness of Him and our union with Him. Sunderedfrom that union

and estranged from God, the intellect is led captive everywhere; and it cannot regain its stabilityunless it submits to God and is stilled by Him, joyfully uniting with Him through unceasing and diligent prayer andthrough noetrcally confessing all our lapses to Him each day. God immediately forgives everything to those who askforgiveness in a spirit of humility and contrition and who ceaselessly invoke His holy name. As the

St Gregory of SinaiOn Prayer: Seven Texts

How to Master the Intellect in Prayer

Psalmist says, 'Confess to the Lord and call upon His holy name' (cf Ps. 105:1). Holding the breath also helps tostabilize the intellect, but only temporarily, for after a little it lapses into distraction again. But when prayer isactivated, then it really does keep the intellect in its presence, and it gladdens it and frees it from captivity. But itmay sometimes happen that the intellect, rooted in the heart, is praying, yet the mind wanders and gives its attentionto other things; for the mind is brought under control only in those who have been made perfect by the Holy Spiritand who have attained a state of total concentration upon Christ Jesus.

How to Expel Thoughts

4. In the case of a beginner in the art of spiritual warfare. God alone can expel thoughts, for it is only those strongin such warfare who are in a position to wrestle with them and banish them. Yet even they do not achieve this bythemselves, but they fight against them with God's assistance, clothed in the armor of His grace. So when thoughtsinvade you, in place of weapons call on the Lord Jesus frequently and persistently and then they will retreat; for theycannot bear the warmth produced in the heart by prayer and they flee as if scorched by fire. St John Klimakos tellsus, 'Lash your enemies with the name of Jesus', because God is a fire the cauterizes wickedness (cf. Deut. 4:24; Heb.12:29). The Lord is prompt to help, and will speedily come to the defense of those who wholeheartedly call on Himday and night (cf Luke 18:7). But if prayer is not yet activated in you, you can put these thoughts to flrght in anothermanner, by imitating Moses (cf. Exod. 17:11-12); rise up, lift hands and eyes to heaven, and God will rout them.

Then sit down again and begin to pray resolutely. This is what you should do if

you have not yet acquired the powerof prayer. Yet even if prayer is activated in you and you are attacked by the more obdurate and grievous of thebodily passions - namely, listlessness and lust - you should sometimes rise up and lift your hands for help againstthem. But you should do this only seldom, and then sit down again, for

How to Expel Thoughts

there is a danger of the enemy deluding you by showing you some illusory form of the truth. For only in thosewho are pure and perfect does God keep the intellect steadfast and intact wherever it is, whether above or below, orin the heart.

How to Psalmodize

5. Some say that we should psalmodize seldom, others often, others not at all. You for your part should notpsalmodize often, for that induces unrest, nor yet not at all, for that induces indolence and negligence. Instead youshould follow the example of those who psalmodize from time to time, for moderation in all things is best, as theancient Greeks tell us. To psalmodize often is appropriate for novices in the ascetic life, because of the toil itinvolves and the spiritual knowledge it confers. It is not appropriate for hesychasts, since they concentrate whollyupon praying to God with travail of heart, eschewing all conceptual images. For according to St John Klimakos,'Stillness is the shedding of thoughts', whether of sensible or of intelligible realities. Moreover, if we expend all ourenergy in reciting many psalms, our intellect will grow slack and will not be able to pray firmly and resolutely.Again according to St John Klimakos, 'Devote-most of the night to prayer and only a little of it to psalmody.'

You, too, should do the same. If you are seated and you see that prayer is continuously active in your heart, do notabandon it and get up to psalmodize until in God's good time it leaves you of its own accord. Otherwise, abandoningthe interior presence of God, you will address yourself to Him from without, thus passing from a higher to a lowerstate, provoking unrest and disrupting the intellect's serenity. Stillness, in accordance with its name, is maintained bymeans of peace and serenity; for God is peace (cf. Eph. 2:14)

beyond all unrest and clamor. Our psalmody, too,should accord with our mode of life, and be angelic, not unspiritual and secular. For to psalmodize with clamor

and a loud voice is a sign of inner turbulence. Psalmody has been given to us because of our grossness and

indolence, so that we may be led back to our true state.

As for those not yet initiated into prayer - this prayer which, according to St John Klimakos, is the source of thevirtues' and which waters, as plants, the faculties of the soul - they should psalmodize frequently, without measure,reciting a great variety of psalms; and they should not desist from such assiduous practice until they have attainedthe state of contemplation and find that noetic prayer is activated within them. For the practice of stillness is onething and that of community life is another. 'Let each persist in that to which he is called' (1 Cor. 7:24) and he willbe saved. It was on account of this that I hesitated to write to you, for I know that you live among those still weak. Ifsomeone's experience of praying derives from hearsay or reading; he will lose his way, for he lacks a guide.According to the fathers, once you have tasted grace you should psalmodize sparingly, giving most of your time toprayer. But if you find yourself growing indolent you should psalmodize or read patristic texts. A ship has no needof oars when a fair wind swells the sails and drives it lightly across the salt sea of the passions. But when it isbecalmed it has to be propelled by oars or towed by another boat.

To gainsay this, some point to the holy fathers, or to certain living persons, saying that they kept all-night watchespsalmodizmg the whole time. But, as we learn from Scripture, not all things can be accomplished by everyone, forsome lack diligence and strength. As St John Klimakos says, 'Small things may not always seem so to the great, andgreat things may not seem altogether perfect to the small' Everything is easy for the perfect; and not everyone, eithernow or in former times, remains always a probationer, nor does everyone travel along the same road or pursue it tothe end. Many have passed from the life of ascetic labor to the life of contemplation, laying aside outward practices,keeping the Sabbath

according to the spiritual law, and delighting in God alone. They are replete with divine fare,and the grace that fills them does not permit them to psalmodize or to meditate on anything else; for the time beingthey are in a state of ecstasy, having attained, if only in part and as a foretaste, the ultimate

desire of all desires. Others have been saved through pursuing the life of ascetic labor until their death, awaitingtheir reward in the life to come. Some have received conscious assurance of salvation at their death, or else afterdeath they have given off a fragrant odor as testimony to their salvation. Like all other Christians they had receivedthe grace of baptism, but because of the distraught and ignorant state of their intellects they did not participate in itmystically while still alive. Others excel in both psalmody and prayer and spend their lives in this manner, richlyendowed with ever-active grace and not impeded by anything. Yet others, being unlettered and restrictingthemselves solely to prayer, have persevered in stillness until the end of their lives; and in doing this they have donewell, uniting themselves as single individuals with God alone. To the perfect, as we said, all things are possiblethrough Christ who is their strength (cf. Phil. 4:13).

How to Partake of Food

6. What shall I say about the belly, the queen of the passions? If you can deaden or half-deaden it, do not relent. It

has mastered me, beloved, and I worship it as a slave and vassal, this abettor of the demons and dwelling-place ofthe passions. Through it we fall and through it - when it is well-disciplined - we rise again. Through it we have lostboth our original divine status and also our second divine status, that which was bestowed on us when after ourinitial corruption we are renewed in Christ through baptism, and from which we have lapsed once more, separatingourselves from God through our neglect of the commandments, even though in our ignorance we exalt ourselves.We think that we are with God, but it is only by keeping the commandments that we advance, guarding andincreasing the grace bestowed upon us.

As the fathers have pointed out, bodies vary greatly in their need for food. One person needs little, another muchto sustain his physical strength, each according to his capacity and habit. A hesychast, however, should always eattoo little, never too much. For when the stomach is heavy the intellect is clouded, and you cannot pray resolutely andwith purity. On the contrary, made drowsy by the effects of too much food you are soon induced to sleep; and as you

sleep the food produces countless fantasies in your mind. Thus in my opinion if you want to attain salvation andstrive for the Lord's sake to lead a life of stillness, you should be satisfied with a pound of bread and three or fourcups of water or wine daily, taking at appropriate times a little from whatever victuals happen to be at hand, butnever eating to satiety. In this way you will avoid growing conceited, and by thanking God for everything you willshow no disdain for the excellent things He has made. This is the counsel of those who are wise in such matters. Forthose weak in faith and soul, abstinence from specific types of food is most beneficial; St Paul exhorts them to eatherbs (cf Rom. 14:2), for they do not believe that God will preserve them.

What shall I say? You are old, yet have asked for a rule, and an extremely severe one at that. Younger peoplecannot keep to a strict rule by weight and measure, so how will you keep to it? Because you are ill, you should beentirely free in partaking of food. If you eat too much, repent and try again. Always act like this - lapsing andrecovering again, and always blaming yourself and no one else - and you will be at peace, wisely converting suchlapses into victories, as Scripture says. But do not exceed the limit I set down above, and this will be enough, for noother food strengthens the body as much as bread and water. That is why the prophet disregarded everything elseand simply said, 'Son of man, by weight you will eat your bread and by measure you will drink water' (cf. Ezek.4:16).

There are three degrees of eating: self-control, sufficiency and satiety. Self-control is to be hungry after havingeaten. Sufficiency is to be neither hungry nor weighed down. Satiety is to be slightly weighed down. To eat againafter

reaching the point of satiety is to open the door of gluttony, through which unchastity comes in. Attentive tothese distinctions, choose what is best for you according to your powers, not overstepping the limits. For accordingto St Paul only the perfect can be both hungry and full, and at the same time be strong in all things (cf. Phil. 4:12).

On Delusion and Other Subjects

7. I wish you to be fully informed about delusion, so that you can guard yourself against it and not do great harmto yourself through

ignorance, and lose your soul. For our free will easily veers towards keeping company with the demons,especially when we are inexperienced and still under their sway. Around beginners and those who rely on their owncounsel the demons spread the nets of destructive thoughts and images, and open pits into which such people fall;for their city is still in the hands of the workers of iniquity, and in their impetuosity they are easily slain by them. Itis not surprising that they are deceived, or lose their wits, or have been and still are deluded, or heed what is contraryto truth, or from inexperience and ignorance say things that should not be said. Often some witless person will speakabout truth and will hold forth at length without being aware of what he is saying or in a position to give a correctaccount of things. In this way he troubles many who hear him and by his inept behavior he brings abuse and ridiculeon the heads of hesychasts. It is not in the least strange that beginners should be deceived even after making greatefforts, for this has happened to many who have sought God, both now and in the past.

Mindfulness of God, or noetic prayer, is superior to all other activities. Indeed, being love for God, it is the chiefvirtue. But a person who is brazen and shameless in his approach to God, and who is over-zealous in his efforts toconverse with Him in purity and to possess Him inwardly, is easily destroyed by the demons if they are givenlicense to attack him; for in rashly and presumptuously striving prematurely to attain what is beyond his presentcapacity, he becomes a victim of his own arrogance. The Lord in His

compassion often prevents us fromsuccumbing to temptation when He sees us aspiring over-confidently to attain what is still beyond our powers, for inthis way He gives each of us the opportunity of discovering his own presumption and so of repenting of his ownaccord before making himself the butt of demons as well as of other people's ridicule or pity. Especially is this thecase when we try to accomplish this task with patience and contrition; for we stand in need of much sorrow andlamentation, of solitude, deprivation of all things, hardship and humility, and - most important of all for itsmarvelous effects - of guidance and obedience; for otherwise we might unknowingly reap thorns instead of wheat,gall instead of sweetness, ruin instead of salvation. Only the strong and the perfect can continuously fight alone withthe demons, wielding against them the sword of the Spirit, which is the teaching of God (cf Eph. 6:17). The weakand beginners

escape death by taking refuge in flight, reverently and with fear withdrawing from the battle rather than risking

their life prematurely.

For your part, if you are rightly cultivating stillness and aspiring to be with God, and you see something eithersensory or noetic, within or without, be it even an image of Christ or of an angel or of some saint, or you imagineyou see a light in your intellect and give it a specific form, you should never entertain it. For the intellect itselfnaturally possesses an imaginative power and in those who do not keep a strict watch over it it can easily produce, toits own hurt, whatever forms and images it wants to. In this way the recollection of things good or evil can suddenlyimprint images on the intellect's perceptive faculty and so induce it to entertain fantasies, thus making whoever thishappens to a daydreamer rather than a hesychast.

Be careful, therefore, not to entertain and readily give assent to anything even if it be good, before questioningthose with spiritual experience and investigating it thoroughly, so as not to come to any harm. Always be suspiciousof it and keep your intellect free from colors, forms and images. For it has often happened that

things sent by God totest our free will, to see which way it inclines and to act as a spur to our efforts, have in fact had bad consequences.For when we see something, whether with mind or senses - even if this thing be from God - and then readilyentertain it without consulting those experienced in such matters, we are easily deceived, or will be in the future,because of our gullibility. A novice should pay close attention solely to the activity of his heart, because this is notled astray. Everything else he must reject until the passions are quietened. For God does not censure those who outof fear of being deluded pay strict attention to themselves, even though this means that they refuse to entertain whatHe sends them until they have questioned others and made careful enquiry. Indeed, He is more likely to praise theirprudence, even though in some cases He is grieved.

Yet you should not question everyone. You should go only to one, to someone who has been entrusted with theguidance of others as well, who is radiant alike in his life and in his words, and who although poor makes many rich(cf. 2 Cor. 6:10). For people lacking spiritual experience have often done harm to foolish questioners, and for thisthey will be judged after death. Not everyone is qualified to guide others: only those can do so who have beengranted divine discrimination - what St Paul calls the 'discrimination of spirits'

(1 Cor. 12:10) - enabling them to distinguish between bad and good with the sword of God's teaching (cf Eph.6:17). Everyone possesses his own private knowledge and discrimination, whether inborn, pragmatic or scientific,but not all possess spiritual knowledge and discrimination. That is why Sirach said, 'Be at peace with many, but letyour counselors be one in a thousand' (Eccles. 6:6). It is hard to find a guide who in all he does, says or thinks is freefrom delusion. You can tell that a person is undeluded when his actions and judgment are founded on the testimonyof divine Scripture, and when he is humble in whatever he has to give his mind to. No little effort is needed to attaina clear understanding of the truth and to be cleansed from whatever is contrary to grace, for the devil - especially inthe case of beginners - is liable to present his delusions in the forms of truth, thus giving his deceit a spiritual guise.

If, then, you are striving in stillness to attain a state of pure prayer, you must journey with great trepidation andinward grief, questioning those with spiritual experience, accepting their guidance, always lamenting your sins, and

full of distress and fear lest you should be chastised or should fall away from God and be divorced from Him in thislife or the next. For when the devil sees someone leading a penitent life, he retreats, frightened of the humility thatsuch inward grief engenders. But if, with a longing that is satanic rather than authentic, you are presumptuousenough to imagine that you have attained a lofty state, the devil will easily trap you in his nets and make you hisslave. Thus the surest guard against falling from the joy of prayer into a state of conceit is to persevere in prayer andinward grief, for by embracing a solace-filled grief you keep yourself safe from harm. Authentic prayer - the warmththat accompanies the Jesus Prayer, for it is Jesus who enkindles fire on the earth of our hearts (cf. Luke 12:49) -consumes the passions like thorns and fills the soul with delight and joyfulness. Such prayer comes neither fromright or left, nor from above, but wells up in the heart like a spring of water from the life-quickening Spirit. It is thisprayer alone that you should aspire to realize and possess in your heart, always keeping your intellect free fromimages, concepts and thoughts. And do not be afraid, for He who says, "Take heart; it is I; be not afraid' (Matt.14:27), is with us - He whom we seek and who protects us always. When we invoke God we must be neither timidnor hesitant.

If some have gone astray and lost their mental balance, this is[V4] 285

St Gregory of SinaiOn Prayer: Seven Texts

On Delusion and Other Subjects

because they have in arrogance followed their own counsels. For when you seek God in obedience and humility,and with the guidance of a spiritual master, you will never come to any harm, by the grace of Christ who desires allto be saved (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4). Should temptation arise, its purpose is to test you and to spur you on; and God, who haspermitted this testing, will speedily come to your help in whatever way He sees fit. As the holy fathers assure us, aperson who lives an upright and blameless life, avoiding arrogance and spuming popularity, will come to no harmeven if a whole host of demons provoke him with countless temptations. But if you are presumptuous and followyour own counsel you will readily fall victim to delusion. That is why a hesychast must always keep to the

royalroad. For excess in anything easily leads to conceit, and conceit induces self-delusion. Keep the intellect at rest bygently pressing your lips together when you pray, but do not impede your nasal breathing, as the ignorant do, in caseyou harm yourself by building up inward pressure.

There are three virtues connected with stillness which we must guard scrupulously, examining ourselves everyhour to make sure that we possess them, in case through unmmdfulness we are robbed of them and wander far awayfrom them. These virtues are self-control, silence and self-reproach, which is the same thing as humility. They areall-embracing and support one another; and from them prayer is bom and through them it burgeons.

Grace begins to operate in people during prayer in different ways, for, as the apostle says, the Spirit distributesHimself as He wills in a variety of modes, and is perceived and known correspondingly (cf. Heb. 2:4). Elijah theTishbite serves here as an example for us (cf. 1 Kgs. 19:11-12). In some the Spirit appears as a whirlwind of awe,dissolving the mountains of the passions and shattering the rocks of our hardened hearts, so that our worldly self istranspierced and mortified. In others the Spirit appears as an earthquake, that is to say as a sense of inward jubilationor what the fathers more clearly define as a sense of exultation. In others He is manifested inwardly as a fire that is

non-material yet real; for what is unreal and imaginary is also non-existent. Finally, in others - particularly in thosewell advanced in prayer - God produces a gentle and serene flow of light. This is when Christ comes to dwell in theheart, as St Paul says (cf. Eph. 3:17), mystically disclosing Himself through the Holy Spirit. That is why God said toElijah on Mount Horeb that the Lord was not in this or in that -

not in the particular actions He manifests Himself in to beginners - but in the gentle flow of light; for it is in thisthat He attests the perfection of our prayer.

Question: What should we do when the devil transforms himself into an angel of light (cf 2 Cor. 11:14) and triesto seduce us?

Answer: You need great discrimination in order to distinguish between good and evil. So do not readily or lightlyput your trust in appearances, but weigh things well, and after testing everything carefully cleave to what is goodand reject what is evil (cf. 1 Thess. 5:21-2). You must test and discriminate before you give credence to anything.You must also be aware that the effects of grace are self-evident, and that even if the devil does transform himself hecannot produce these effects: he cannot induce you to be gentle, or forbearing, or humble, or joyful, or serene, orstable in your thoughts; he cannot make you hate what is worldly, or cut off sensual indulgence and the working ofthe passions, as grace does. He produces vanity, haughtiness, cowardice and every kind of evil. Thus you can tellfrom its effects whether the light shining in your soul is from God or from Satan. The lettuce is similar inappearance to the endive, and vinegar, to wine; but when you taste them the palate discerns and recognizes thedifferences between each. In the same way the soul, if it possesses the power of discrimination, can distinguish withits noetic sense between the gifts of the Holy Spirit and the illusions of Satan.

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St Gregory Palamas

(1296- 1359)

(Volume 4, pp. 287-425)

Introductory Note

In the Calendar of the Orthodox Church, St Gregory Palamas (1296-1359)^ - 'St Gregory of Thessaloniki', as heis usually termed in Orthodox texts - enjoys a particular prominence, since his memory is celebrated not only onthe day of his death (14 November) but also on the second Sunday in Lent. The first Sunday in Lent,commemorating the definitive restoration of the holy ikons in 843 at the end of the

iconoclast controversy, is known as 'the Sunday of Orthodoxy' or 'the Triumph of Orthodoxy'. If St Gregory'sfeast was assigned to the foUowing Sunday, this means that his successful defence of the divine and uncreatedcharacter of the light of Tabor and his victory over the heretics of his time - Barlaam, Akindynos, Gregoras andothers - were seen as a direct continuation of the preceding celebration, as nothing less than a renewed Triumph ofOrthodoxy.

Bom and brought up in Constantinople, St Gregory Palamas came from a distinguished family, closely linkedwith the imperial house; his father was a personal friend of the Emperor Andronikos II and tutor to the futureEmperor Andronikos III. In his youth Gregory enjoyed for a time the spiritual guidance of Theoliptos ofPhiladelphia. After his father's death he gave up a promising secular career and around 1316, at the age of twenty,he traveled to Mount Athos with two of his brothers; at the same time his mother, with two of his sisters and manyof their servants, entered convents in Thessaloniki. The next twenty years were passed by Gregory in monasticseclusion on the Holy Mountain, except for a six-year period when he left Athos because of

' On the life and theology of Palamas, the fundamental work remains the book of John Meyendorff, A Study ofGregoiy Polamas (London,1964). MeyendorTs more popular study, St Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality (Crestwood, 1974), places Palamas in the broadercontext of Orthodox mystical theology from the fourth century onwards. For more recent bibliography, see the same author's article inDictionnaire de Spiritualite xii (1983), cols 81-107. For selections from the Triads of Palamas, see Nicholas Gendle (tr.), Gregory Palamas: TheTriads (The Classics of Western Spihtiiality: New York, 1983).

the danger of Turkish attacks and settled in a cave near Veroia. Apart from a relatively short time spent incenobia, he chose - like St Gregory of Sinai - to follow the hesychast way of life in various small hermitages.Palamas' normal programme was to spend five days of each week in total solitude, joining his brethren for theLiturgy and other services on Saturday and Sunday. Such was the preparation for his future work as defender ofthe faith.

Around 1335-6 a new era commenced in St Gregory's life. For the next fourteen years he became involved inwhat is often termed the hesychast controversy. Initially his main opponent was a learned Greek from southernItaly, Barlaam the Calabrian, who maintained that the light seen by the hesychasts in prayer was not the uncreatedlight of the Godhead but simply a created and physical radiance. He also ridiculed the psychosomatic techniqueused by some of the

monks, referring to them as omphalopsychoi, 'navel-psychics', people who locate the soul inthe navel. Although, so far as his personal wishes were concerned Gregory would doubtless have preferred toremain in the stillness of his hermitage, he felt obliged to come to the defence of the spiritual tradition of the HolyMountain and to act as spokesman for the monks. This forced him to leave Athos and to settle in the imperialcapital. Gregory's standpoint was vindicated at the Council of Constantinople in 1341, and Barlaam now withdrewto the west. Unfortunately this did not mean the end of the controversy, which continued for another six years(1341-7), chiefly because the theological points at issue became entangled in politics. Gregory's main opponentsduring this second period of the dispute were his former friend Gregory Akindynos and the humanist scholar andstatesman Nikiphoros Gregoras. The doctrinal position upheld by Gregory was eventually reaffirmed at twofurther councils held in Constantinople in 1347 and 1351, and since then it has remained the official teaching ofthe Orthodox Church.

The final period in St Gregory's career began in 1347, when he was consecrated Metropolitan of Thessaloniki, thesecond city of the Byzantine Empire. Because of the unstable political situation, he could not take possession of hissee until 1350. As bishop he made strenuous efforts to reconcile the members of his flock to each other, deeplydivided as they still were by the social and political conflicts of the 1340's. In his sermons he insisted upon theurgent need for social righteousness, consistently supporting the poor and oppressed. His

preaching was also firmly sacramental: whereas the writings of Palamas to be found in The Philokalia make butfew references to baptism and the eucharist, the balance is redressed by his pastoral homilies to the faithful ofThessaloniki. In 1354, while traveling by sea to Constantinople, he was taken captive by the Turks and spent a yearas a prisoner in Asia Minor, where he took part in doctrinal discussions with the local Muslims. Following his deathin 1359, a popular veneration for him sprang up almost immediately in Thessaloniki, in Constantinople and on theHoly Mountain, and only nine years later, in 1368, he was formally glorified as a saint.

The writings of St Gregory Palamas are extremely voluminous. A six-volume critical edition is in course ofpublication, prepared by Professor Panagiotis K. Christou, assisted by other scholars; five volumes have so farappeared (Thessaloniki, 1962-92). St Makarios and St Nikodimos included six works by Palamas in The PhilokaUa:

(i) To the Most Reverend Nun Xenia (Greek text, ed. P.K. Christou, vol. v, pp. 193-230). This was written around1342-6, at a time when Palamas was suffering sharp persecution from his opponents, and he makes several allusionsto his difficulties (§§ 3, 5, 6, 57). The work itself, however, is not an answer to his theological critics, but astatement of the traditional Orthodox teaching concerning the ascetic life, written at Xenia's request. It is the mostsubstantial of Palamas's ascetic writings, and offers a general overview of his teaching about human nature, aboutdeath and the future life, about the passions and the virtues, and in particular about virginity and inward grief. Littleis said concerning the higher stages of the spiritual way, but he refers briefly to the vision of divine light (§ 59) andto the uncreated character of the grace dwelling within the saints (§ 70). Nothing is known about the nun Xeniaexcept that she had under her charge the daughters of 'the Great King', by which is probably meant the daughters ofthe late Emperor Andronikos III, who had died in 1341 (§ 7).

(2) A New Testament Decalogue (Greek text, ed. P.K. Christou, vol. v, pp. 251-60).^ This was probablycomposed by St Gregory Palamas towards the end of his life, during his episcopate, perhaps in the autumn of 1355.It is a brief summary of Christian moral teaching,

^ There is a previous English translation by S.A. Mousalimas in The Greek Orthodox Theological Review XXV(1980), pp. 297-305.

indicating how the Ten Commandments of the Mosaic Law are transformed within the life of the Church becauseof the incarnation. Addressed to the laity, it exemplifies St Gregory's pastoral concerns. Among other things herefers to the Orthodox teaching on ikons (§ 2), on spiritual fatherhood (§ 5), and on virginity and marriage (§ 6), buthe does not discuss the specifically hesychast teaching

concerning inner prayer.

(3) In Defence of Those who Devoutly Practise a Life of Stillness (= Triads I, ii: Greek text, ed. J. Meyendorff,Defense des saints hesychastes [Spicilegium Sacrum Lovaniense 30-31: Louvain, 1959], vol. i, pp. 75-101). This isa section of a much larger work, written by Palamas in defence of the hesychast tradition of prayer during 1337-9,chiefly in answer to the attacks of Barlaam the Calabrian. In the portion included in The Philokalia, Palamas' mainconcern is to uphold the legitimacy of the psychosomatic technique. The crouching posture adopted by thehesychast assists him in establishing a 'circular' movement within himself, so that his concentration is turned inward(§§ 5, 8). Slowing down the rhythm of the breathing also helps to hold in check the volatile and easily distractedintellect; but this control of the breathing is an exercise appropriate chiefly for 'beginners ... recently embarked onthe spiritual path', who may abandon it once they have advanced 'to a higher stage' (§ 7). Yet, while attaching onlylimited importance to the physical method, Gregory Palamas recognizes that it reflects a genuinely Christian

doctrine of the human person, with the heart regarded symbolically as man's spiritual centre (§ 3). The body isGod's creation, and we are to take full advantage of its Spirit-bearing potentialities; St Paul condemned, not thebody itself, but only 'the body of this death' (§ 1).

(4) Three Texts on Prayer and Purity of Heart (Greek text, ed. P.K. Christou, vol. v, pp. 157-9). Here again StGregory emphasizes the centrality of the heart (§5). In this brief work there is no specific reference to the concernsof the hesychast controversy, and it was perhaps written in the early 1330's, before the outbreak of the dispute.

(5) Topics of Natural and Theological Science and on the Moral and Ascetic Life: One Hundred and Fifty Texts(Greek text, ed. Robert E. Sinkewicz [Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, Studies and Texts 83: Toronto,1988]). This important but difficult work has been variously dated: some place it at the end of St Gregory's life,others assign it to the years 1344-7, but most probably it was composed in

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1349-50. It provides a comprehensive picture of his theology, constituting what Fr Meyendorff calls 'a sort ofsystematic siimma'. It falls into two distinct parts:

(a) §§ 1-63: a general survey of the divine economy of creation and salvation:^

(i) The non-etemity of the cosmos: the world had an origin, and it will have a consummation (§§ 1-2).

(2) The celestial realm (§§ 3-7).

(3) The terrestrial realm (§§ 8-14).

(4) The natural human faculties: sense perception, the imaginative faculty, the intellect (§§ 15-20).

(5) Spiritual knowledge, and its superiority to Hellenic philosophy (§§ 21-29).

(6) Human nature, compared with that of the angels and the animals; the soul and its immortality (§§ 30-33).

(7) God the Holy Trinity and the Triadic image of God in the human person (§§ 3,V-40).

(8) The fallen state of man (§§ 41—63). Here St Gregory emphasizes that man is more perfectly in God's imagethan the angels (§§ 62-63; but cf § 78).

(b) §§ 64-150: a refutation of false teachings concerning the divine light of Tabor and the uncreated energies ofGod. This is directed primarily against Akindynos rather than Barlaam, who at the time of writing had alreadywithdrawn from the dispute and returned to Italy. St Gregory Palamas, supporting his argument with frequentquotations from the fathers, maintains that there is a distinction-in-unity between God's essence and His energies.The divine essence signifies God's absolute transcendence, and we humans will never participate in it, either in thislife or in the age to come. The divine energies, on the other hand, permeate the entire creation, and we humansparticipate in them by grace (§§ 65, 78). Thus deification (theosis) and union with God signify union with God'senergies, not His essence (§ 75). That which the energies effect and produce is created, but the divine energiesthemselves are supernatural, eternal and uncreated (§§ 72-73).

The energies are Trinitarian, proceeding from allthree persons at

' It has to be said that the cosmological aspects of this survey reflect very largely Palamas' own personal views and must not be taken torepresent Christian cosmology as such. It should also be noted that Palamas' account of the thought of 'the Greek sages' makes it clear thathe was not closely familiar with their works.

once (§§ 72, 112). They are not to be identified with the hypostasis of the Holy Spirit (§ 74.). The threefolddistinction within God between the one essence, the three hypostases, and the multiplicity of energies in no waydestroys the divine unity, for God 'is indivisibly divided and is united dividedly, and yet in spite of this suffersneither multiplicity nor compositeness' (§ 81). The light which shone from Christ at the transfiguration on Tabor isnot created, natural or physical, but it is the uncreated energies of God. It is this uncreated glory that the saintsbehold in prayer, and that will shine from Christ at the second coming. Thus, even when experienced in this presentlife, it is an eschatological glory, the eternal radiance of the age to come (§§ 74, 146-50).

(6) The Declaration of the Holy Mountain (also known as 'The Hagioritic Tome': Greek text, ed. P.K. Christou,vol. ii, pp. 567-78). This short statement of the hesychast standpoint, drafted by St Gregory Palamas in 1340, is ofparticular importance because it bears the signatures of leading Athonite monks and also of the local hierarch, theBishop of Hierissos in Chalkidiki. This makes it clear that Palamas is expressing, not merely his own personalopinion, but the accepted teaching of the Holy Mountain. Palamas emphasizes the eschatological character of thedivine light, which is a foretaste and anticipation of the glory of the age to come. The monks who bear witness tothe uncreated light fulfill a prophetic role within the Church: just as the Old Testament prophets foretold Christ'sfirst coming at the incarnation, so the monks as the prophets of the new covenant point forward to His secondcoming (Prologue). Here as elsewhere Palamas expresses a holistic vision of the human person: the body isglorified along with the soul (§ 4.). Our theosis is in no sense merely symbolical or metaphorical: it is

a genuineand specific reality, a pure gift of grace experienced even in this present life (§ 2).

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St Gregory PalamasTo the Most Reverend Nun Xenia

1. Those who truly desire to live a monastic life find all talk troublesome, whether it is with people at large orwith those living in the same way as themselves. For it breaks the continuity of their joyful intercourse with God and

sunders, and sometimes shatters, that one-pointed concentration of the intellect which constitutes the inward and truemonk. For this reason one of the fathers, when asked why he avoided people, answered that he could not be withGod while associating with men. Another father, speaking of these things from experience, affirms that not only talkwith others but even the sight of them can destroy the steady quietude of mind possessed by those who practicestillness.

2. If you observe carefully you will find that even the thought of someone's

approach, and the expectation of avisit and of having to talk, disrupt your mental tranquility. If you write you burden your intellect with even moredemanding worries. For if you are among those who are well advanced on the spiritual path and who through theirsoul's good health have attained God's love, then though this love will be active within you while you write, it willbe so only indirectly and not unalloyed. But if you are one who still falls into many maladies and passions of thesoul - and such in truth am I - and must continually cry out to God, 'Heal me, for I have sinned against Thee' (cf. Ps.41:4), then it is unwise for you to leave off prayer before being healed and of your own accord to occupy yourselfwith something else. In addition, through your writings you converse also with those who are not present, and oftenwhat you write falls into the hands of others, sometimes of those whom you would not wish to read it, since writingsusually survive the death of their author.

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St Gregory PalamasTo the Most Reverend Nun Xenia

3. For this reason many of the fathers who practiced extreme stillness could not bear to write anything at all,although they were in a position to set forth great and profitable things. It is true that I myseh", who totally lack thestrict observance of the fathers, have the habit of writing, although only when some great need compels me to do so.Now, however, those who look upon certain of my writings with malicious eyes and seek to find in them grounds todo me wrong have made me more reluctant to write. Such people, according to St Dionysios, are passionatelyattached to the component parts of letters, to meaningless penstrokes, to unfamiliar syllables and words - things thatdo not touch their power of noetic understanding. It is indeed witless, perverse and entirely inappropriate to want tounderstand divine things and yet to pay attention, not to the purpose of what is said, but to the words alone.

4. Yet I know that I have been justly censured, not because what I have written conflicts with the fathers - for bythe grace of Christ I have been kept from doing this - but because I have written on things whereof I am unworthy,perhaps, like another Uzzah, trying through words to prevent the chariot of truth from overturning (cf. 2 Sam. 6:6-7).Yet my punishment was not a matter of divine wrath, but a fit measure of instruction. On account of this myadversaries were not permitted to get the better of me. Yet this, too, may have been due to my unworthiness, for, itseems, I was not worthy, or capable, of suffering anything on

behalf of the truth, and so sharing joyfully in thesufferings of the saints.

5. Indeed, was not St John Chrysostom, who while yet clothed with the body was united to the Church of thefirstborn in the heavens, and who as no other truthfully, clearly and fluently wrote about holiness - was not he cut offfrom the Church and condemned to exile on the charge of holding and expounding the doctrines of Origen? And StPeter, the chief of the foremost choir of the Lord's disciples, says that unlearned and unstable people in his daysdistorted difficult passages in St Paul's epistles and brought destruction upon themselves as a result (cf 2 Pet. 3:16).

6. I myself had intended to give up writing altogether because of the somewhat trivial attacks made upon me, eventhough those who attacked me have been synodically condemned. But now you, most reverend mother, through yourconstant requests in letters and

messages, have persuaded me once again to write words of counsel, though indeed you have no great need ofcounsel. For by the grace of Christ you have gained, together with old age, a venerable understanding, and for manyyears you have studied and applied the ordinances of the divine commandments, dividing your life in due measurebetween obedience and stillness. In this way you have wiped clean the tablet of your soul, so that it is capable ofreceiving and preserving whatever God writes on it. But the soul completely dominated by its desire for spiritualinstruction is never sated.

7. It is because of this that Wisdom says of herself, 'Those who eat Me will still be hungry' (Eccles. 24:21); whilethe Lord, who has instilled this divine desire in the soul, says of Mary who chose 'what is best' that it will not betaken away from her (cf. Luke 10:42). But you perhaps may be in need of such words of instruction for the sake ofthe daughters of the Emperor who live under your guidance, and especially for the sake of the nun Synesis, who is ofyour own family and whom you have longed to espouse to Christ, the bestower of mcorruption. And, indeed, youimitate Him in that, just as He truly assumed our form for our sakes, so you have now assumed the role of a novicewho is in need of instruction. Therefore, although I am not rich in words, and particularly in

such words as these, Ishall repay the debt of Christian love from what I now possess, showing thus my good will as well as my obedienceand my readiness to keep the commandment, 'Give to him that asks' (Matt. 5:42).

8. You must know, then, reverend mother - or rather, let the maidens who have chosen to live a godly life learnthrough you - that there is a death of the soul, though by nature the soul is immortal. This is made clear by thebeloved disciple, St John the Theologian, when he says, 'There is sin that leads to death' and 'There is sin that doesnot lead to death' (1 John 5:16, 17). By death he certainly means here the death of the soul. And St Paul says,'Worldly sorrowfulness produces death' (2 Cor. 7:10) - death, certainly, of the soul. Again, St Paul says, 'Awake, youwho sleep, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light' (Eph. 5:14). From which 'dead' is one enjoined toarise? Clearly, from those who have been killed by 'sinful desires that wage war against the soul' (1 Pet. 2:11).Hence the Lord also described those who live in this vain world as 'dead', for when one of His disciples asked to beallowed to go and bury his father. He refused permission, and told him to follow Him, leaving the dead to

bury their dead (cf Matt. 8 : 22). Here, then, the Lord clearly calls those living people 'dead', in the sense thatthey are dead in soul.

9. As the separation of the soul from the body is the death of the body, so the separation of God from the soul is

the death of the soul. And this death of the soul is the true death. This is made clear by the commandment given inparadise, when God said to Adam, 'On whatever day you eat from the forbidden tree you will certainly die' (cf. Gen.2:17). And it was indeed Adam's soul that died by becoming through his transgression separated from God; forbodily he continued to live after that time, even for nine hundred and thirty years (cf. Gen. 5:5).

10. The death, however, that befell the soul because of the transgression not only crippled the soul and made manaccursed; it also rendered the body itself subject to fatigue, suffering and corruptibility, and finally handed it over todeath. For it was after the dying of his inner self brought about by the transgression that the earthly Adam heard thewords, 'Earth will be cursed because of what you do, it

will produce thorns and thistles for you; through the sweat ofyour brow you will eat your bread until you return to the earth from which you were taken: for you are earth, and toearth you will return' (Gen. 3:17-19).

11. Even though at the regeneration to come, in the resurrection of the righteous, the bodies of the godless andsinners will also be raised up, yet they will be given over to the second death, age-long chastisement, the unsleepingworm (cf. Mark 9:44), the gnashing of teeth, the outer, tangible darkness (cf. Matt. 8:12), the murky andunquenchable fire of Gehenna (cf. Matt. 5:22), in which, as the prophet says, the godless and sinners 'will be burnedup together and there will be none to quench the flame' (Isa. 1:31). For this is the second death, as St John has taughtus in the Revelation (cf. Rev. 20:14). Hark, too, to the words of St Paul, 'If you live in accordance with your fallenself, you will die, but if through the Spirit you extirpate the evil actions of your fallen self, you will live' (Rom.8:13). Here he speaks of life and death in the age to be: life is the enjoyment of the everlasting kingdom, death age-long chastisement.

12. Thus the violation of God's commandment is the cause of all types of death, both of soul and body, whether inthe present life or in that endless chastisement. And death, properly speaking, is this: for the soul to be unharnessedfrom divine grace and to be yoked to sin. This death, for those who have their wits, is truly dreadful and somethingto

be avoided. This, for those who think aright, is more terrible than the chastisement of Gehenna. From this let usalso flee with all our might. Let us cast away, let us reject all things, bid farewell to all things: to all relationships,actions and intentions that drag us downward, separate us from God and produce such a death. He who is frightenedof this death and has preserved himself from it will not be alarmed by the oncoming death of the body, for in him thetrue life dwells, and bodily death, so far from taking true life away, renders it inalienable.

13. As the death of the soul is authentic death, so the life of the soul is authentic life. Life of the soul is union withGod, as life of the body is its union with the soul. As the soul was separated from God and died in consequence ofthe violation of the commandment, so by obedience to the commandment it is again

united to God and is quickened.This is why the Lord says in the Gospels, 'The words I speak to you are spirit and life' (John 6:63). And havingexperienced the truth of this, St Peter said to Him, 'Thy words are the words of eternal life' (John 6:68). But they arewords of eternal life for those who obey them; for those who disobey, this commandment of life results in death (cf.Rom. 7:10). So it was that the apostles, being Christ's fragrance, were to some the death-inducing odor of death.

while to others they were the hfe-inducing odor of life (of. 2 Cor. 2:16).

14. And this life is not only the life of the soul, it is also the life of the body. Through resurrection the body is alsorendered immortal: it is delivered not merely from mortality, but also from that never-abating death of futurechastisement. On it, too, is bestowed everlasting life in Christ, free of pain, sickness and sorrow, and truly immortal.

The death of the soul through transgression and sin is, then, followed by the death of the body and by itsdissolution in the earth and its conversion into dust; and this bodily death is followed in its turn by the soul'sbanishment to Hades. In the same way the resurrection of the soul - its return to God through obedience to the divinecommandments - is followed by the body's resurrection and its reunion with the soul. And for those who experienceit the consequence of this resurrection will be true mcorruption and eternal life with God: they will become spiritualinstead of non-spiritual, and will dwell in heaven as angels of God (cf. Matt. 22:30).

15. As St Paul says, 'We shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we shall be with theLord for ever' (1 Thess. 4:17).

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The Son of God, who in His compassion became man, died so far as His body was concerned when His soul wasseparated from His body; but this body was not separated from His divinity, and so He raised up His body oncemore and took it with Him to heaven in glory. Similarly, when those who have lived here in a godly manner areseparated from their bodies, they are not separated from God, and in the resurrection they will take their bodies withthem to God, and in their bodies they will enter with inexpressible joy there where Jesus has

preceded us (cf Heb.6:20) and in their bodies they will enjoy the glory that will be revealed in Christ (cf. 1 Pet. 5:1). Indeed, they willshare not only in resurrection, but also in the Lord's ascension and in all divine life. But this does not apply to thosewho live this present life in an unregenerate manner and who at death have no communion with God. For though allwill be resurrected, yet the resurrection of each individual will be in accordance with his own inner state (cf. 1 Cor.15:23). He who through the power of the Spirit has extirpated his materialistic worldly proclivities in this life willhereafter live a divine and truly eternal life in communion with Christ. But he who through surrendering to hismaterialistic and worldly lusts and passions has in this life deadened his spiritual being will, alas, hereafter be co-judged with the devil, the agent-provocateur of evil, and will be handed over to unbearable and immeasurablechastisement, which is the second and final death.

16. Where did true death - the death that produces and induces in soul and body both temporal and eternal death -have its origin? Was it not in the realm of life? Thus was man, alas, at once banished from God's paradise, for he hadimbued his life with death and made it unfit for paradise. Consequently true life - the life that confers immortalityand true life on both soul and body - will have its origin here, in this place of death. If you do not strive here to gainthis life in your soul, do not deceive yourself with vain hopes about receiving it hereafter, or about God then beingcompassionate towards you. For then is the time of requital and retribution, not of sympathy and compassion: thetime for the revealing of God's wrath and anger and just judgment, for the manifestation of the mighty and sublimepower that brings chastisement upon unbelievers. Woe to him who falls into the hands of the living God (cf. Heb.10:31)! Woe to him who hereafter experiences the Lord's wrath, who has not acquired in this life the fear of God and

so come to know the might of His anger, who[V4] 299

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has not through his actions gained a foretaste of God's compassion! For the time to do aU this is the present hfe.That is the reason why God has accorded us this present life, giving us a place for repentance. Were this not the casea person who sinned would at once be deprived of this life. For otherwise of what use would it be to him?

17. This is why no one should give way to despair, even though the devil finds various means by which toinsinuate it not only into those who live carelessly but also into those who practice the ascetic life. If, then, the timeof this life is time for repentance, the very fact that a sinner still lives is a pledge that God will accept whoeverdesires to return to Him. Free will is always part and parcel of this present life. And it lies within the power of freewill to choose or to reject the road of life or the road of death that we have described above; for it can pursuewhichever it wishes. Where, then, are the grounds for despair, since all of us can at all times lay hold of eternal lifewhenever we want to?

18. Do you not perceive the grandeur of God's compassion? When we are disobedient He does not immediatelycondemn us, but He is longsuffermg and allows us time for conversion. Throughout this period of longsuffermg Hegives us power to gain divine sonship if we so wish. Yet why do I say 'gain sonship'? He gives us power to be unitedwith Him and to become one spirit with Him (cf. 1 Cor. 6:17).

If, however, during this period of longsuffering we pursue the opposite path and choose death rather than true life,God does not take away the power that He gave us. And not only does He not take it away, but He reminds us of itagain and again. From the dawn till the dusk of this life. He goes round, as in the parable of the vineyard, seeking usout and inviting us to engage in the works of life (cf. Matt. 20:7-15). And who is it that calls us in this way andwould engage us in His service? It is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of all solace (cf. 2 Cor. 1:3). Andwho is the vineyard into which He calls us to work? The Son of God, who said, 'I am the vine' (cf. John 15:1). For,indeed, no one can come to Christ, as He Himself said in the Gospels, unless the Father draws him (cf. John 6:44).Who are the branches? We ourselves are. For directly afterwards Christ says, 'You are the branches. My Father isthe vine-dresser' (cf. John 15:1, 5).

19. The Father, therefore, through the Son reconciles us to Himself, not taking into account our offences (cf. 2Cor. 5:19); and

He calls us, not in so far as we are engaged in unseemly works, but in so far as we are idle; although idleness isalso a sin, since we shall give an account even

for an idle word (cf Matt. 12:36). But, as I said. God overlooksformer sins and calls us again and again. And what does He call us to do? To work in the vineyard, that is, to work

on behalf of the branches, on behah'' of ourselves. And afterwards - 0 the incomparable grandeur of His compassion!- He promises and gives us a reward for toiling on our own behalf. 'Come,' He says, 'receive eternal life, which Ibestow abundantly; and as though in your debt I reward you in full for the labor of your journey and even for yourvery desire to receive eternal life from Me.'

20. Who does not owe the price of redemption to the Redeemer from death? Who will not give thanks to the Giverof Life? But He even promises to give us a reward as well, an inexpressible reward. 'I am come'. He says, 'so thatthey may have life, and have it in all its fullness' (John 10:10). What is meant by 'in all its fullness'? He came notonly to be and to live with us, but to make us His brethren and coheirs. This, it seems, is the reward granted 'in all itsfullness' to those who hasten to the life-giving Vine and establish themselves as branches in it, who labor on behalfof themselves and who cultivate it on behalf of themselves. And what do they do? First, they cut away everythingthat is superfluous and that, instead of promoting, impedes the bearing of fruit worthy of the divine cellars. Andwhat are these things? Wealth, soft living, vain honors, all things that are transitory and fleeting, every sly andabominable passion of soul and body, all the litter gathered while daydreaming, everything heard, seen and spokenthat can bring injury to the soul. If you do not cut out these things and prune the heart's offshoots with greatassiduity, you will never bear fruit fit for eternal life.

21. Married people can also strive for this purity, but only with the greatest difficulty. For this reason all who fromtheir youth have by God's mercy glimpsed that eternal life with the mind's keen eye, and who have longed for itsblessings, avoid getting married, since likewise in the resurrection, as the Lord said, people neither marry nor aregiven in marriage, but are 'as the angels of God' (Matt. 22:30). Therefore those who wish to become 'as the angels ofGod' will even in this present life, like the sons of the resurrection, rightly place themselves above bodilyintercourse. Moreover, the occasion for sinning was first provided by the wife. Consequently those who do not

wish ever to give the devil any way of catching hold of them should not marry.

22. If this body of ours is hard to harness and hard to lead towards virtue - if, indeed, we carry it about like aninnate opposing force -why should we ever entrust ourselves to it, thereby increasing the difficulty we have inattaining a state of virtue by binding ourselves to many different bodies? How will the woman, who is tied bynatural bonds to a husband, children and all her blood relations, possess that freedom for which she is enjoined tostrive? How will she, when she has taken upon herself the care of so many, devote herself, free from care, to theLord? How will she possess tranquility when entangled with such a multitude?

23. For this reason she who is really a virgin - who models herself on Him who is virgin, who was bom of aVirgin and who is the Bridegroom of the souls that live in true virginity - will shun not merely carnal wedlock butalso worldly companionship, having renounced all kindred, so that like St Peter she can say boldly to Christ, 'Wehave left all and followed Thee' (Matt. 19:27). If an earthly bride leaves father and mother for the sake of a mortalbridegroom and cleaves to him alone, as Scripture says (cf. Gen. 2:24), what is untoward in a woman leaving herparents for the sake of an immortal Bridegroom and bridal chamber? How can she whose 'citizenship is in heaven'(Phil. 3:20) have kinship on the earth? How can she who is not an offspring of the flesh but of the Spirit (cf. John

1:13) have a fleshly father or mother or blood relative? How will she who has renounced the carnal life, and so as faras possible has spumed and continues to spurn her own body, entertain any relationship whatever to bodies that arenot her own? And if, as they say, likeness leads to friendship and everything adheres to what is like itself, how canthe virgin align herself with worldly loves and fall victim once again to the disease of self-adornment? 'Love of theworld is hostility to God' (Jas. 4:4), says the apostle who is our bridal escort into the spiritual bridal chamber. Thus avirgin who reverts to worldly affections is not only in danger of separating herself from the immortal Bridegroom,but also of being at enmity with him.

Do not be astonished or distressed by the fact that no criticism is made in Scripture of women who live inwedlock, caring for the things of the world but not for the things of the Lord (cf. 1 Cor. 7:34), while at the same timethose who have vowed themselves to virginity

are forbidden even to approach worldly things and are never allowed to live in comfort. Yet St Paul also warnsthose who live in wedlock: 'The time is short; so let those who have wives live as though they had none and thoseinvolved in worldly affairs as though they were not involved' (1 Cor. 7:29, 31): and this, 1 think, is harder toaccomplish than the keeping of one's virginity. For experience shows that total abstinence is easier than self-controlin food and drink. And one might justly and truly say that if someone is not concerned to save himself, we havenothing to say to him, but if he is so concerned, then he should know that a life led in virginity is more easilyaccomplished and less laborious than married life.

24. Yet let us leave these matters and return, 0 virgin, bride of Christ, branch of the Vine of life, to what was saidabove. The Lord says, '1 am the vine, you are the branches. . . . My Father is the vine-dresser... He prunes everybranch in Me that bears fruit, so that it may bring forth more fruit' (John 15:1, 2, 5). Reflecting on His carefulconcern for yourself, recognize what fruit your virginity should bear and how great is the Bridegroom's affection foryou; and rejoice the more and strive in return to be still more obedient to Him. Gold that has been mixed with brassis called counterfeit, but brass that has been smelted with gold dust appears brighter and more radiant than its naturalcolor. Similarly, it is an honorable thing for married women to long for you and the chastity of your way of life, butfor you to yearn for them brings dishonor upon you. For such a yearning returns you to the world, first becausethough you have died to the world you still want to have relations with those who live in the world and to share theirlife, and second because being in contact with such persons leads you to desire what they desire for themselves andtheir kindred, that is, abundance in all things pertaining to this life - wealth, fame, glory, and the delight that thesethings bring. In this way you will fall away from your Bridegroom's will, for in the Gospels He clearly disparagessuch things, saying, 'Woe to the rich, woe to those who mock, woe to those who stuff themselves, woe to you wheneveryone speaks well of you' (cf Luke 6:24-26).

25. Why does He deplore such people? Is it not because their souls are dead? What kinship can the bride of lifehave with the dead? What communion with those who walk in the opposite direction? Wide and broad is the waythey travel;

and unless they restrain themselves by blending some aspects of your life with theirs, they will lapse intototal

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destruction. But you should enter through the strait and narrow gate, the way that leads to life (cf. Matt. 7:13-14).You cannot pass through this narrow gate and along this way while carrying a load of self-glory, or a cornucopia ofself-indulgence, or the burden of money and possessions.

26. But when you hear that other path of life called 'broad', do not suppose it to be free of sorrow, for in fact it isfilled with many oppressive misfortunes. He calls it 'broad' and 'wide' because there are many who pass along it (cf.Matt. 7:13), each bearing a heavy load of the rubbish of this fleeting material life. But yours is a narrow path, 0virgin, not even wide enough for two together. None the less, many at first embroiled in the world have renounced iton the death of their spouses, emulating your supernatural way of life and choosing to journey along your path so asto share in its rewards. And St Paul enjoins us to honor such people, for with hope in God they persevere insupplication and prayer (cf 1 Tim. 5:3, 5). Although the narrow way of life involves affliction, it also brings solace,confers the kingdom of heaven and fosters salvation. But on the broad path what is pleasant and what is grievous areboth alike. For, as St Paul says, worldly sorrowfulness produces death, while 'godly sorrow produces a savingrepentance that is not to be regretted' (2 Cor. 7:10).

27. It is for this reason that the Lord blesses the opposite of what the world calls blessed, saying, 'Blessed are thepoor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens' (Matt. 5:3). In saying 'Blessed are the poor', why did He add'in spirit"? So as to show that He blesses and commends humility of soul. And why did He not say, 'Blessed are thosewhose spirit is poor', thus indicating the modesty of their manner of thinking, but 'Blessed are the poor in spirit"? Soas to teach us that poverty of body is also blessed and fosters the kingdom of heaven, but only when it isaccomplished in accordance with the soul's humility, when it is united to it and originates from it. By calling thepoor in spirit blessed He wonderfully demonstrated what is the root, as it were, and mainspring of the outwardpoverty of the saints, namely, their humility of spirit. For from our spirit, once it has embraced the grace of thegospel teaching, flows a wellsprmg of poverty that

'waters the whole face of our ground' (cf. Gen. 2:6), I mean ouroutward self, transforming us into a paradise of virtues. Such, then, is the poverty that is called blessed by God.

28. 'The Lord has given a concise saying upon the earth', as the

prophet observes (cf. Isa. 10:23. LXX). Having pointed out and called blessed the root cause of voluntary andmany-sided poverty. He also teaches us in this single short saying about its many effects. For we can choose to shedpossessions, and to be frugal and abstinent, simply in order to be praised by other people. In such a case we are not'poor in spirit'. Hypocrisy is bom of self-conceit, and self-conceit is contrary to being poor in spirit. But if youpossess a contrite, lowly and humble spirit you cannot but rejoice in outward simplicity and self-abasement, because

you will regard yourself as unworthy of praise, comfort, prosperity and all such things. The poor man deemedblessed by God is he who considers himself unworthy of these things. It is he who is really poor, being poor in fullmeasure. It was on this account that St Luke also wrote, 'Blessed are the poor' (6:20), without adding 'in spirit'.These are they who have hearkened to the Son of God, following Him and assimilating themselves to him; for Hesaid, 'Learn of Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls' (Matt. 11:29). Hence'theirs is the kingdom of heaven', for they are 'joint-heirs with Christ' (Rom. 8:17).

29. The soul is tripartite and is considered as having three powers: the intelligent, the mcensive, and theappetitive. Because the soul was ill in all three powers, Christ, the soul's Healer, began His cure with the last, theappetitive. For desire unsatisfied fuels the incensive power, and when both the appetitive and incensive powers aresick they produce distraction of mind. Thus the soul's incensive power will never be healthy before the appetitivepower is healed; nor will the intelligence be healthy until the other two powers are first restored to health.

30. If you examine things you will find that the first evil offspring of the appetitive power is love of materialpossessions. For the desires that help men to

live are not blameworthy, as is clear from the fact that they are with usfrom a very early age. Love of possessions, however, comes a little later - although still in childhood - and in thisway it is evident that it does not have its ground in nature, but is a matter of individual choice. St Paul rightly termedit the root of all evils (cf. 1 Tim. 6:10), and the evils that it usually begets are niggardliness, trickery, rapacity,thievery and, in short, greed in all its forms, which St Paul called a second idolatry (cf. Col. 3:5). Even in the case ofevils that do not spring directly from it, greed nearly always provides the fuel for their sustenance.

31. Such evils, begotten of the love for material things, are passions

of a soul that has no zeal for spiritual work. We can free ourselves more easily from passions that are a matter ofour own volition than from those rooted in nature. It is disbelief in God's providence that makes it difficult for us toeradicate the passions that arise from our love of possessions, for such disbelief leads us to put our trust in materialriches. 'It is easier', said the Lord, 'for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into thekingdom of God' (Matt. 19:24). But if we trust in material riches, this means nothing to us; we long for worldly,perishable wealth, not for a kingdom that is heavenly and eternal. And even when we fail to acquire that wealth, themere desire for it is extremely pernicious. For, as St Paul says, those who want to be rich fall into the temptationsand snares of the devil (cf 1 Tim. 6:9). Yet when wealth comes, it proves itself to be nothing, since its possessors,unless they are brought to their senses by experience, still thirst after it as though they lacked it. This love that is nolove does not come from need; rather the need arises from the love. The love itself arises from folly, the same follythat led Christ, the Master of all, justly to describe as foolish the man who pulled down his bams and built greaterones (cf Luke 12:18-20).

32. How could such a person not be a fool when for the sake of things that cannot profit him - 'For a man's lifedoes not consist in the abundance of the things that he possesses' (Luke 12:15) - he gives up what is most profitableof all? He fails to become a wise merchant, selling even necessities, so far as possible, and in this way adding to the

capital of a truly bountiful and gainful form of commerce or husbandry - a husbandry, indeed, which even before theharvest time multiplies a hundredfold that which was sown, thus foreshowing that the profit to come and the harvestshortly to be reaped will be indescribable and unimaginable. And the curious thing is that the smaller the storeroomsthe seed comes from the larger will the harvest be.

Hence there is no justification in aspiring to become rich even for a good cause. The truth is that people arefrightened of being poor because they have no faith in Him who promised to provide all things needful to those whoseek the kingdom of God (cf. Matt. 6:33). It is this fear that spurs them, even when they are endowed with all things,and it prevents them from ever freeing themselves from this sickly and baneful desire. They go on amassing wealth,loading themselves with a worthless burden or, rather, enclosing themselves while still living in a most absurd kindof tomb.

33. Dead men are simply buried in[V4] 306

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the earth, but the intellect of a living pinchpenny is buried in the dust and earth of gold. Further, for those whosesenses are in a healthy state this grave smells worse than the normal one, and the more earth one throws on it, thestronger the smell grows. For the festering wound of wretched persons buried in this way spreads, and its stenchrises up to heaven, even up to the angels of God and to God Himself. They have become loathsome and repulsive,stinking on account of their folly, as David puts it (cf Ps. 38:5). Voluntary poverty - not undertaken to impressothers - delivers men from this foul-smelling and deadly passion; and such poverty is precisely the 'poorness inspirit' that the Lord called blessed.

34. Yet a monk who has this passion cannot be obedient. If he persists in serving it diligently, there is a grave riskof him lapsing also into incurable maladies of the body. Gehazi in the Old Testament and Judas in the NewTestament are sufficient examples of this. The first sprouted leprosy as evidence of his incurable soul (cf. 2 Kgs.5:27), while the second hanged himself in the field of blood, and falling headlong he burst his belly and hisintestines gushed out (cf. Acts 1:18). If, then, renunciation precedes obedience, how can it be the other way round?And if renunciation is the initial step in the monastic profession, how can anyone who has not first renouncedmaterial possessions succeed in any of

the other struggles of monastic life? Moreover, if a monk is incapable ofpracticing obedience, how will he be able to cultivate stillness by himself in a cell, devoting himself to solitude andpersevering in prayer? But as the Lord says, 'Where your treasure is, there will your intellect be also' (Matt. 6:21).How, then, can you gaze noetically at Him who sits in heaven on the right hand of the divine Majesty (cf. Heb. 1:3)while you are still amassing treasure upon the earth? How will you inherit that kingdom which this passion entirelyprevents you even from conceiving in your mind? 'Blessed', therefore, 'are the poor in spirit, for theirs is thekingdom of heaven.' Do you see how many passions the Lord has cut away with one beatitude?

35. Yet this is not all. If love for material things is the first offspring of evil desire, there is a second offspringwhich is even more to be shunned, and a third that is no less evil. What is the second? Self-flattery. We encounterthis passion while we are still quite young, as a kind of prelude to the love for worldly things which we encounterlater. Here I am referring to the self-flattery that expresses itself in the

beautification of the body through expensive clothing and so on. It is what the fathers caU worldly vanity, todistinguish it from the other kind of vanity, which afflicts those noted for their virtue and is accompanied by self-conceit and hypocrisy, whereby the devil contrives to plunder and disperse our spiritual riches.

36. You can be completely healed from all these things if you become aware of divine glory and long for it whileregarding yourself as unworthy of it, and if you patiently endure people's scorn while thinking you deserve it. Inaddition, you should esteem God's glory above your own, in conformity with the Psalmist's words, 'Not unto us, 0Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory' (Ps. 115:2). And should you feel that you have done somethingpraiseworthy, you should attribute it to God, proclaiming Him as its cause and gratefully praising Him for it and notyourself. In your rejoicing you will regard each virtue as a gift, and will not become conceited about it, since it is notyour personal achievement; on the contrary, you will grow more humble, and night and day will fix your mentaleyes on God, as the eyes of the handmaid - to use the Psalmist's words

again - are fixed on the hands other mistress(cf Ps. 123:2). At the same time you will be full of fear lest, becoming separated from Him who alone confersgoodness and preserves us in it, you are pulled down into the pit of evil; for this is what happens when you areenslaved to conceit and vanity. A great help in healing these passions is withdrawal from the world and living a lifeof solitude, keeping yourself to your cell. But you must be deeply aware of the frailty of your will and regardyourself as not strong enough to mix with other people. Yet what is this but the poverty in spirit that the Lord calledblessed?

37. If you recognize the disgrace that such self-flattery brings upon you, you will spurn it with all your might. Forby longing for men's praise you dishonor yourself through the very deeds you do in order to attain it. By caringabout your appearance, by attaching great importance to the fame of your ancestors and to gaudy clothes and so on,you show that yours is still a puerile mind. For all these things are mere dust, and what is more despicable than dust?The nun who wears what she wears not simply for covering or warmth, but because it is gossamery and gaudy, notonly proclaims the barrenness of her soul but also displays the indecency of a loose woman. She should listen ratherto Him who says, 'They that wear fine clothing are to be found in royal palaces' (Matt. 11:8). But 'our citizenship ism heaven'(Phil. 3:20),

as St Paul says. Let us not be cast out of heaven into the abodes of the 'ruler of the darkness of this world' (cf.Eph. 6:12) simply for the sake of foolish ostentation in our clothing.

38. This same thing happens to those who practice virtue in order to be praised by others. While they are called tobe citizens of heaven, they 'degrade their glory to the dust' (Ps. 7:5), and make their dwelling there, thus drawing

upon themselves the curse of the Psalmist. For their prayer does not rise to heaven, and their every endeavor falls tothe earth, since it is not supported by the wings of divine love that raise aloft the works we do upon the earth. Soalthough they labor they reap no reward. But why do I speak of reaping no reward? For indeed they bear fruit, onlyit is the fruit of shame, instability of thoughts, and distraction and turbulence of mind. For the Lord, as the Psalmistsays, 'has

scattered the bones of those who court popularity; they have been put to shame, because God has set themat naught' (Ps. 53:5. LXX).

This passion is the subtlest of all the passions, and for this reason the person who fights against it must not merelybe on guard against coupling with it or avoid assenting to it, but he must regard the very provocation as assent andmust shield himself from it. Only in this way can he narrowly escape speedy defeat. If through inward watchfulnesshe manages to do this, the provocation itself will become an occasion for compunction. But if he fails to do it, theprovocation induces pride; and once a person has fallen a victim to pride it is hard, in fact impossible, to cure him,for such a fall is the same as the devil's. Yet even before this the passion for popularity brings such injury upon thoseit masters that it shipwrecks faith itself (cf. 1 Tim. 1:19). Our Lord confirms this when He says, 'How can you havefaith in Me when you receive honor from one another and do not seek for the honor that comes from the only God?'(cf John 5:44).

39. What have you to do with honor accorded by men or, rather, with the empty name of honor? Not only is suchhonor no honor at all, but it also deprives you of true honor. And not only this, but among other evils it alsogenerates envy: envy that is potentially murder and that was the cause of the first murder (cf Gen. 4:1-8) and then ofthe slaying of God (cf. Matt. 27:18). What, in fact, does this passion for human honor contribute to our nature? Doesit sustain or protect it, or in any way restore or heal it when it has gone awry? No one could claim it does anythinglike that; and I think that

this alone is enough to show how baseless are the excuses made for its perversions. Should you examine thingsclosely you will find that in a treacherous fashion the thirst for glory among men first provokes us to various kindsof villainy and then denounces us, shamelessly unmasking itself and disgracing even its own lovers. And yet thechampions of profane Greek teachings dare to say that nothing in life can be achieved without it - an absurddelusion!

40. But we Christians have not been taught thus, we who bear the name of Him who lovingly anointed our naturewith His own and who watches over our

actions. Turning to Him, we accomplish whatever is most excellent throughHim and because of Him, doing all for the glory of God (cf 1 Cor. 10:31) and having no desire at all to courtpopularity. In fact, we are positively displeasing to people, as St Paul, the most intimate initiate of our Lawmakerand Lawgiver, confirms when he says: 'If I still wanted to be popular I would not be the servant of Christ' (Gal.1:10).

41. Let us now see whether the third offspring of evil desire is likewise destroyed by that poverty which the Lordcalled blessed. The third offspring of the desire of a sick soul is gluttony; and from gluttony arises every kind of

carnal impurity. Yet why do we call this the third and last when it is implanted in us from our very birth? For notonly this passion, but also the natural motions related to the begetting of children, can be detected in infants that arestill at the breast. Why, then, do we place the disease of carnal desire at the end of the list? The reason is this: thepassions to which it gives birth belong to us by nature, and natural things are not indictable; for they were created byGod who is good, so that through them we can act in ways that are also good. Hence in themselves they do notindicate sickness of soul, but they become evidence of such sickness when we misuse them. When we coddle theflesh in order to foster its desires, then the passion becomes evil and self-indulgence gives rise to the carnal passionsand renders the soul diseased.

The first victim of these passions is the intellect. Because the passions initially spring from the mind, the Lordsays that the evil thoughts which defile us proceed from the heart (cf. Matt. 15:18-19). And prior to the Gospel theLaw tells us, 'Be attentive to yourself, lest there arise some secret iniquity in your hearts' (Deut. 15:9. LXX). Yetthough it is the intellect that initiates evil, none the less the images of sensory bodies that entice the intellect towardsthese bodies and incite it to misuse them are impressed on it from below, through

the senses, and above all through the eyes, for the eyes can embrace a defiling object even from a distance. Eve,our primordial mother, is clear evidence of this: first she saw that the forbidden tree was 'comely to look upon andbeautiful to contemplate', and then, assenting in her heart, she plucked and ate its fruit (cf

Gen. 3:6). So we wereright when we said that yielding to the beauty of physical objects precedes and leads us to the degrading passions.Hence the fathers advise us not to look closely upon another's beauty or to find delectation in our own.

42. Before the mind becomes embroiled with them, the passions which are naturally implanted in childrenconduce not to sin but to the sustaining of nature. For this reason they are not at that stage evil. It is in the passion-charged intellect that the carnal passions arise initially, and so healing must begin with the intellect. You cannotextinguish a raging fire by slashing at it from above; but if you pull away the fuel from below, the fire will die downimmediately. So it is with the passions of impurity. If you do not cut off the inner flow of evil thoughts by means ofprayer and humility, but fight against them merely with the weapons of fasting and bodily hardship, you will labor invain. But if through prayer and humility you sanctify the root, as we said, you will attain outward sanctity as well.This it seems to me is what St Paul counsels when he exhorts us to gird our loins with truth (cf Eph. 6:14). One ofthe fathers has excellently interpreted this as signifying that when the contemplative faculty of the soul tightly girdsthe appetitive faculty it also girds the passions manifested through the loins and the genitals. The body, nevertheless,is in need of hardship and moderate abstention from food, lest it become unruly and more powerful than theintelligence. Thus all the passions of the flesh are healed solely by bodily hardship and prayer issuing from a humbleheart, which indeed is the poverty in spirit that the Lord called blessed.

43. If, then, you yearn to be enriched with holiness - and without holiness no one will see the Lord (cf. Heb.12:14) - you should abide in your own cell, enduring hardship and praying with humility. For the cell of one rightlypursuing the monastic life is a haven of self-restraint. But all that lies outside, and especially what is found in market

places and at fairs, constitutes an obscene medley of ugly sounds and sights, drowning the wretched soul of the nunwho exposes herself to them. One might also call this evil world a raging fire that devours those

who come into contact with it and bums up every virtue they possess. The fire

that did not bum was found in thedesert (cf. Exod. 3:2). Instead of in the desert, you should abide in your cell and hide yourself a little until thetempest of passion has passed over you. When it has passed, spending time outside your cell will do you no harm.

44. Then in truth you will be poor in spirit and will gain dominion over the passions and clearly be called blessedby Him who said, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' How, indeed, can those not becalled blessed who have absolutely no truck with material wealth and place all their trust in Him? Who wish toplease only Him? Who with humility and the other virtues live in His presence? Let us, then, also become poor inspirit by being humble, by submitting our unregenerate self to hardship and by shedding all possessions, so that thekingdom of God may be ours, and we may fulfill our blessed aspirations by inheriting the kingdom of heaven.

The Lord has left us certain synoptic statements that express in a succinct manner the Gospel of our salvation, andone of these statements is the beatitude of which we have been speaking. By including so many virtues in that singlephrase and excluding so many vices, the Lord has conferred His blessing on all those who through these virtues andthrough repentance prune the aspect of their souls that is vulnerable to passion. But this is not all; for in that phraseHe also includes many other things, analogous not to pruning but rather to the activity of cold, ice, snow, frost andthe violence of the wind - in a word, to the hardship that plants undergo in winter and summer by being exposed tothe cold and heat, yet without which nothing upon earth can ever bear fruit.

45. What are these things? The various trials and temptations that afflict us and that we must gladly endure if weare to yield fruit to the Husbandman of our souls. If we were to feel sorry for earthly plants and build a wall aroundthem and put a roof over them and not allow them to suffer such hardships, then although we may prune andotherwise tend them assiduously, they will bear no fruit. On the contrary, we must let them endure everything, forthen, after the winter's hardship, in springtime they will bud, blossom, adorn themselves with leaves and, coveredwith this bountiful foliage, they will produce young fruit. This fruit, as the sun's rays grow stronger, will thrive,mature and become ready for harvesting and eating. Similarly, if we do not courageously bear the burden of trial andtemptation - even though we may practice all the other virtues - we

will never yield fruit worthy of the divine wine-press and the eternal granaries. For it is through patient endurance

of afflictions deliberately entered into and those that are unsought, whether they come upon us from without orassault us from within, that we become perfect. What happens naturally to plants as a result of the farmer's care andthe changing seasons happens, if we so choose, to us, Christ's spiritual branches (cf John 15:5), when as creaturespossessing free-will we are obedient to Him, the Husbandman of souls.

46. Unless we bear with patience the afflictions that come to us unsought, God will not bless those that weembrace deliberately. For our love for God is demonstrated above all by the way we endure trials and temptations.First the soul has to surmount afflictions embraced willingly, thereby learning to spurn sensual pleasure and self-glory; and this in its turn will permit us readily to bear the afflictions that come unsought. If for the sake of povertyof spirit you spurn such pleasure and self-glory, and also regard yourself as deserving the more drastic remedy ofrepentance, you will be ready to bear any affliction and will accept any temptation as your due, and you will rejoicewhen it comes, for you will see it as a cleansing-agent for your soul. In addition, it will spur you to ardent and mostefficacious prayer to God, and you will regard it as the source and protector of the soul's health. Not only will youforgive those who afflict you, but you will be grateful to them and will pray for them as for your benefactors. Thusyou will not only receive forgiveness for your sins, as the Lord has promised (cf. Matt. 6:14), but you will also attainthe kingdom of heaven and God's benediction, for you will be blessed by the Lord for enduring with patience and aspirit of humility till the end.

47. Having spoken briefly about spiritual pruning, I will now add something about the productiveness that resultsfrom it. After first calling blessed those who gain imperishable wealth because of their poverty in spirit. God, whoalone is blessed, next makes those who grieve partakers of His own blessedness, saying, 'Blessed are those whogrieve, for they will be consoled' (Matt. 5:4).

48. Why did Christ thus join grief to poverty? Because it always coexists with it. But while sorrow over worldlypoverty induces the soul's death, grief over poverty embraced in God's name induces the 'saving repentance that isnot to be

regretted' (2 Cor. 7:10). The first kind of poverty, being unsought, is followed by unwished-for grief; thesecond, being freely embraced, is followed by grief freely embraced. Because the grief here

called blessed is linked with the poverty embraced in God's name, necessarily issuing from it and depending on itas its cause, it too possesses a spiritual and voluntary character.

49. Let us see, then, how this blessed poverty begets blessed grief. In this single word 'poverty' four types ofspiritual poverty are represented: poverty in body, poverty in our way of thinking, poverty in worldly goods, andpoverty through trials and temptations that come upon us from without. But because you see me setting down thesefour types of poverty separately, do not conclude that they are to be practiced separately. Each of them is to beimplemented along with the others. Hence they are embraced by a single beatitude, which also discloses in amarvelous way what is, as it were, their root and mainspring, I mean, our spirit. For from our spirit, as has been said,once it has embraced the grace of the gospel teaching, there flows a wellspring of poverty that 'waters the whole faceof our ground' (cf Gen. 2:6), I mean our outward self, transforming us into a paradise of virtues.

50. There are, then, four types of spiritual poverty, and each gives birth to a corresponding kind of grief, as weU asto a corresponding form of spiritual solace. In the first place, freely-embraced physical poverty and humility - andthat means hunger, thirst, vigils and in general hardship and tribulation of body, as well as a reasonable restraint ofthe senses - begets not only grief, but also tears. For just as insensibility, callousness and hardness of heart developas the result of ease, soft living and self-indulgence, so from a way of life marked by self-control and renunciationcome contrition of heart and compunction, expelling all bitterness and generating a gentle gladness. It is said thatwithout contrition of heart it is impossible to be free from vice; and the heart is rendered contrite by a triple form ofself-control, in sleep, food and bodily ease. When through such contrition the soul is freed from vice and bitterness,it will certainly receive spiritual delight in their place. This is the solace on account of which the Lord calls thosewho grieve blessed. St John Klmiakos, who has constructed for

us the ladder of spiritual ascent, says: 'Thirst andvigil afflict the heart, and when the heart is afflicted, tears spring up. ... He who has found this by experience willlaugh' - he will laugh with that blessed joyousness which springs from the solace that the Lord promised. Thus

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from bodily poverty embraced out of love for God is bom the grief that brings solace to those who experience itand fills them with blessing.

51. How, in the second place, does grief arise from a fear-dominated state of mind and a godly humility of soul?Self-reproach always coexists with humility of soul. Initially self-reproach strongly emphasizes the fear of torment,bringing before our eyes a frightening image in which all the various conflicting forms of hell are combined intoone. Our fear is increased yet more as we reflect that these torments of hell are inexpressible, and so even worse thanthey have been painted, and - to add still further to the dismay - that they are unending. Heat, cold, darkness, fire,movement and immobility, bonds, terrors, and the biting of undying beasts are all brought together into this singlecondemnation; but all these things fail properly to convey the true horror of hell which - to use St Paul's words -'man's mind has not grasped' (1 Cor. 2:9).

52. What, then, is this profitless, unconsoling and endless grief experienced in hell? It is the grief stirred up inthose who have sinned against God when they become aware of their offences. There, in hell, convicted of their sins,stripped of all hope of salvation or of any improvement in their condition, they feel yet greater anguish and griefbecause of the unsought reproof of their conscience. And this itself, and the everlasting nature of their grief, givesrise to yet another form of grief, and to another dreadful darkness, to unbearable heat and a helpless abyss ofdespondency. In this life, however, such grief is altogether beneficial, for God hearkens to it compassionately, somuch so that He even came down arid dwelt among us; and He promised consolation to those who grieve in thisway, the consolation being Himself, since He is called, and He is indeed, a Comforter (cf. John 14:16).

53. Do you see what grief arises in a humble soul and the consolation that ensues? Indeed, self-reproach on itsown, when lying for a protracted time upon

the soul's thoughts like some intellectual weight, crushes and pressesand squeezes out the saving wine that gladdens the heart of man (cf. Ps. 104:15), that is to say, our inner self. Thiswine is compunction (cf. Ps. 60:3. LXX). Together with grief compunction crushes the passions and, having freed

the soul from the weight that oppresses it, fiUs it with blessed joy. That is the reason why Christ says, 'Blessed arethose who grieve, for they will be consoled' (Matt. 5:4).

Thirdly, grief also arises from the shedding of possessions, that is to

say, from poverty in worldly goods and in what we gather around us. This, we said, is to be conjoined withpoverty in spirit, for it is only when all types of poverty are practiced together that they are perfected and pleasing toGod. Now listen attentively so as to learn how from such poverty in worldly goods grief is produced in us alongwith the consolation that grief confers. When a person bids farewell to all things, to both money and possessions,either casting them away or distributing them to the poor according to the commandment (cf Luke 14:33), andweans his soul from anxiety about such things, he enables it to turn inwards to self-scrutiny, free now from allexternal attachments.

54. And whenever the intellect withdraws itself from all material things, emerges from the turbulence theygenerate, and becomes aware of our inner self, then first of all it sees the ugly mask it has wrought for itself as aresult of its divagations among worldly things, and it strives to wash it away through grief. When it has got rid ofthat uncouth guise, and the soul is no longer coarsely distracted by various cares and worries, then the intellectwithdraws untroubled into its true treasure-house and prays to the Father 'in secret' (Matt. 6:6). And the Father firstbestows upon it peace of thoughts, the gift which contains within it all other gifts. Then He makes it perfect inhumility, which is begetter and sustainer of every virtue - not the humility that consists of words and postures easilytaken by anyone who wishes, but that to which the Holy Spirit bears witness and which the Spirit Himself createswhen enshrined in the depths of the soul.

55. In such peace and humility, as in the secure enclosure of the noetic paradise, every tree of true virtueflourishes. At its heart stands the sacred palace of love,

and in the forecourt of this palace blossoms the harbinger ofthe age to be, ineffable and inalienable joy.

The shedding of possessions gives birth to freedom from anxiety, this freedom to attentiveness and prayer, whileattentiveness and prayer induce grief and tears. Grief and tears expunge passion-imbued predispositions. When theseare expunged the path of virtue is made smooth, since the obstacles are removed, and the conscience is no longerfull of reproach. As a consequence joy and the soul's blessed laughter break through.

56. Then tears of tribulation are transformed into tears of delight, and the words of God become sweet to thepalate and more sweet than honey to the mouth (cf. Ps. 119:103). Prayer changes from entreaty to thanksgiving, andmeditation on the divine truths of faith fills the heart with a sense of jubilation and

unimpeachable hope. This hope is a foretaste of future blessings, of which the soul even now receives directexperience, and so it comes to know in part the surpassing richness of God's bounty, in accordance with thePsalmist's words, 'Taste and know that the Lord is bountiful' (Ps. 34:8). For He is the jubilation of the righteous, thejoy of the upright, the gladness of the humble, and the solace of those who grieve because of Him.

57. Yet does such solace extend no further than this? Are these the only gifts of the sacred betrothal? Will not theBridegroom of such souls manifest Himself still more clearly to those who are perfected and cleansed by blessedgrief, and who through the virtues are arrayed as brides? Undoubtedly He will. We are well aware that at this pointcertain people out of malice are ready to censure us, telling us, in effect, 'You are not to speak in the name of theLord (cf. Jer. 11:21), and if you do we will repudiate your name as evil (cf Luke 6:22), devising and spreadingslanders and falsehoods about you.' But let us take no notice of these people, and let us now continue with what wewere saying, believing in and affirming the teachings of the holy fathers, directing our attention to them andconvincing others through them. For it is written, 'I believed, and so I have spoken' (Ps. 116:10). We also believe,and so we, too, will speak (cf. 2 Cor. 4 13).

58. When every shameful indwelling passion has been expelled and the intellect,

as already indicated, hasreturned wholly to itself, converting at the same time the other powers of the soul - and when through cultivating thevirtues it sets the soul in good order, ever advancing to a more perfect state, ascending through its active spiritualprogress and with God's help cleansing itself more fully - then it not only expunges all imprints of evil but also ridsitself of every accretion, however good it is or appears to be.

59. And when it has transcended intelligible realities and the concepts, not unmixed with images, that pertain tothem, and in a godly and devout manner has rejected all things, then it will stand before God deaf and speechless (cf.Ps. 38 : 13).

It is now that: the intellect becomes simple matter in God's hands and is unresistingly recreated in the mostsublime way, for nothing alien intrudes on it: inner grace translates it to a better state and, in an altogether marvelousfashion, illumines it with ineffable light, thus perfecting our inner being. And when in this manner 'the day breaks

and the morning star rises in our hearts' (cf 2 Pet. 1:19), then 'the true man' - the intellect - 'will go out to his truework' (cf. Ps. 104:23), ascending in the light the road that leads to the eternal mountains. In this light it miraculouslysurveys supramundane things, being either still joined to the materiality to which it was originally linked, or elseseparated from it - this depending on the level that it has attained. For it does not ascend on the wings of the mind'sfantasy, for the mind always wanders about as though blind, without possessing an accurate and assuredunderstanding either of sensory things not immediately present to it or of transcendent intelligible realities. Rather it

ascends in very truth, raised by the Spirit's ineffable power, and with spiritual and ineffable apperception it hearswords too sacred to utter (cf. 2 Cor. 12:4) and sees invisible things. And it becomes entirely rapt in the miracle of it,even when it is no longer there, and it rivals the tireless angelic choir, having become truly another angel of Godupon earth. Through itself it brings every created thing closer to God, for it itself now participates in all things andeven in Him who transcends all, inasmuch as it has faithfully conformed itself to the divine image.

60. For this reason St Neilos says, 'The intellect's proper state is a noetic height, somewhat resembling the sky'shue, which is filled with the light of the Holy Trinity during the time of prayer.' And again: 'If you wish to see theintellect's proper state, rid yourself of all concepts, and then you will see it like sapphire or the sky's hue. But youcannot do this unless you have attained a state of dispassion, for God has to cooperate with you and to imbue youwith His co-natural light.' And St Diadochos writes: 'Divine grace confers on us two gifts through the baptism ofregeneration, one being infinitely superior to the other. The first gift is given to us at once, when grace renews us inthe actual waters of baptism and cleanses all the lineaments of our soul, that is, the image of God in us, by washingaway every stain of sin. The second - our likeness to God - requires our co-operation. When the intellect begins toperceive the Holy Spirit with full consciousness, we should realize that grace is beginning to paint the divinelikeness over the divine image in us. ... Our power of perception shows us that we are being formed into the divinelikeness; but the perfecting of this likeness

we shall know only by the light of grace. But no one can acquire spiritual love unless he experiences fully andclearly the illumination of the Holy Spirit. If the intellect does not receive the perfection of the divine likenessthrough such illumination, although it may have almost every other virtue, it will still have no share in perfect love.'

61. And likewise St Isaac writes that during the time of prayer the intellect that has received grace sees its ownpurity to be 'like heaven's hue, which was also called the "place of God" by the council of the elders of Israel, whenit was seen by them in the mountain' (cf. Exod. 24:9-10). Again, he says that 'prayer is purity of the intellect, and itis consummated when we are illumined in utter amazement by the light of the Holy Trinity'. He also speaks of 'thepurity of the intellect upon and through which the light of the Holy Trinity shines at the time of prayer'.

62. The intellect that has been accounted worthy of this light also transmits to the body that is united with it manyclear tokens of the divine beauty, acting as an intermediary between divine grace and the grossness of the flesh andconferring

on the flesh the power to do what lies beyond its power. This gives birth to a godlike, unmatched andstable state of virtue as well as to a disposition that has no or little inclination to sin. It is then that the intellect isillumined by the divine Logos who enables it to perceive clearly the inner essences - the logoi - of created things andon account of its purity reveals to it the mysteries of nature. In this way, through relationships of correspondence theperceiving and trusting intelligence is raised up to-the apprehension of supernatural realities - an apprehension thatthe Father of the Logos communicates through an immaterial union. From this arise various other miraculouseffects, such as visionary insight, the seeing of things future, and the experience of things happening afar off asthough they were occurring before one's very eyes. But what is more important is that those blessed in this manner

do not aspire to attain such powers. Rather it is as though one were to look at a ray of sunlight and at the same timeperceive the small particles in the air, though this was not one's intention. So it is with those who commune directlywith the

rays of divine light, which by nature reveal all things: according to their degree of purity they truly attain - albeitas something incidental - a knowledge of what is past, of what is present, and even of what is to come. But theirmain concern is the return of the intellect to itself and its concentration on itself. Or, rather, their aim is thereconvergence of all the soul's powers in the intellect - however strange this may sound - and the attaining of thestate in which both intellect and God work together. In this way they are restored to their original state andassimilated to their Archetype, grace renewing in them their pristine and inconceivable beauty. To such aconsummation, then, does grief bring those who are humble in heart and poor in spirit.

63. Since on account of our innate laziness such a consummation is beyond us, let us return to its foundation andsay a little more about grief itself. Grief also accompanies every kind of unsolicited worldly poverty. For how can aperson in need of money not be sorrowful, or he who hungers against his will or who suffers pain and dishonor?Such grief, indeed, lacks all consolation, the more so the more acute the poverty becomes, especially when thesufferer lacks true knowledge. For if you do not keep an intelligent control over sensual pleasures

and pains but,rather, allow yourself to be dominated by them through the misuse of your intelligence, you wrongly and profitlesslymultiply them, even causing yourself great injury. For thereby you give sure and self-accusing evidence that you donot firmly adhere to God's Gospel and to the prophets who preceded Him, and to those who came after Him andwere His disciples and apostles. For these all teach that inexhaustible riches come through poverty, that ineffableglory comes through simplicity of life, that painless delight comes through self-control, and that through patientlyenduring the trials and temptations that befall us we are delivered from the eternal tribulation and affliction held instore for those who choose an easy and soft life in this world instead of entering by the strait and narrow gate (cf.Matt. 7:14).

64. Rightly did St Paul say, 'Worldly sorrowfulness produces death' (2 Cor. 7:10), for from what we have said it isclear that such sorrow is sin leading to death. If the soul's true life is the divine light conferred, according to thefathers, through spiritual grief, then the death of the soul is an evil darkness induced in the soul through worldlysorrowfulness. It is with reference to this darkness that St Basil the Great says, 'Sin, which exists through theabsence of the good.

takes the form of noetic darkness caused by acts of evil'

65. And St 'Mark also says: 'If you are beset by evil thoughts, how can you see the reality of the sin concealedbehind them? This sin wraps the soul in darkness and obscurity, and increases its hold upon us through our evilthoughts and actions. ... If you fail to perceive this general process of sinning, when will you pray about it and becleansed from it? And if you have not been cleansed, how will you find purity of nature? And if you have not foundthis, how will you behold the inner dwelling-place of Christ? . . . We should try to find that dwelling-place andknock with persistent prayer. . . . Not only ought we to ask and receive, but we should also keep safely what isgiven; for some people lose what they have received. A theoretical knowledge or chance experience of this mayperhaps be gained by those who have begun to learn late in life or who are still young; but the constant and patientpractice of these things is barely to be acquired even by devout and deeply experienced elders.' St Makarios,possessor of divine knowledge, says the same, as do all the saints.

66. Just as this darkness derives its existence from all our various sins, so - as you will find if you examine itclosely - worldly sorrowfulness is bom of and dominated by all the passions. Such sorrowfulness is thus an imageand a kind of firstfnut, prelude to and foretaste of the future endless grief that overwhelms those who do not choosefor themselves the grief that the Lord called blessed. This grief not only brings spiritual solace and provides aforetaste of eternal joy, but it also stabilizes virtue and takes from the soul its disposition to fall into a lower state.For although you may become poor and humble yourself and strive to live with godlike simplicity, yet if you do notacquire grief as you advance along the spiritual path you can easily be changed and can readily return in thought tothat which you have abandoned, desiring again what you initially renounced and thus making yourself a transgressor(cf. Gal. 2:18). But if you persist in your intention to live a life of blessed poverty, and devote your attention to it,you will give birth to this grief in yourself and will lose all tendency to regress, and will not wrongly want to returnto what

you have so well abandoned. For, as St Paul says, 'Godly sorrow produces in the soul a saving repentance whichis not to be regretted (cf. 2 Cor. 7:10). Hence one of the fathers has said that 'grief both acts and protects'.

67. This is not the only gain that comes of grief, namely, that you virtually lose all disposition towards evil and donot regress to your former sins; it also makes former sins as though they never existed. For once you begin to grieveover them. God reckons them as unintentional, and there is no guilt in actions performed unintentionally. A personwho grieves because of his poverty shows that he is not in this state through his own choice, and so - like those whowant to be rich or are already rich - he falls into the snares of the devil (cf. 1 Tim. 6:9); and unless he changes andstrives to escape these snares, he will be sent with the devil into eternal torment. On the other hand, if a person whohas sinned against God continues to grieve over his sins, they will be justly regarded as unintentional, and alongwith those who have not sinned he will journey without stumbling on the path leading to eternal life.

68. This, then, is the profit of the initial stage of grief, which is painful inasmuch as it is conjoined with the fear ofGod. But in later stages it becomes in a

wondrous manner wedded to love for God, and once you are conditioned by

it you experience the tender and sacred solace of the Comforter's blessing. But to those who have not experiencedthis it is something virtually incomprehensible, since it cannot be described in words. For if one cannot explain thesweetness of honey to someone who has never tasted it, how can one describe the delight of God's joy and grace tothose who have never experienced it?

69. In addition, the initial stage of grief resembles something that appears to be almost unattainable - a kind ofpetition for betrothal to God. Thus those who grieve in their longing for the Bridegroom to whom they are not yetunited utter as it were certain words of courtship, smiting themselves and calling upon Him with tears as though Hewere not present and perhaps might never be present. But the consummation of grief is pure bridal union with theBridegroom. For this reason St Paul, after describing a married couple's union in one flesh as 'a great mystery',added, 'but I say this with respect to Christ and the Church' (Eph. 5:32). As they are one flesh, so those who are withGod are one spirit, as St Paul clearly testifies elsewhere when he says that he who cleaves to the Lord is one spiritwith Him (cf 1 Cor. 6:17).

70. What are we to say, then, of those who regard the grace that dwells in God's saints as created? Let them knowthat they blaspheme against the Spirit Himself who, in giving His grace, is united to the saints.

Let us add another still clearer example of what we are saying. The first stage of grief resembles the return of theprodigal son. For this reason it fills the mourner with dejection and leads him to employ these very words, 'Father, Ihave sinned against heaven and before Thee, and am no more worthy to be called Thy son' (Luke 15:21). But theconsummation of grief resembles the moment when the heavenly Father runs out to meet him and embraces him.And when the son finds himself accepted with such inexpressible compassion and on account of it is filled withgreat joy and boldness, he receives the Father's embrace and embraces Him in return. Then, entering into theFather's house, he shares together in the feast of divine felicity.

71. Let us, then, in blessed poverty also fall down and weep before the Lord our

God, so that we may wash awayour former sins, make ourselves impervious to evil and, receiving the blessings and solace of the Comforter, mayglorify Him and the unorigmate Father and the Only-begotten Son, now and always and throughout the ages. Amen.

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1. 'The Lord your God is one Lord' (cf. Deut. 6:4), revealed in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit: in the unbegottenFather; in the Son, who is begotten eternally, tunelessly and impassibly as the Logos, and who through Himselfanointed that which He assumed from us and so is called Christ; and in the Holy Spirit, who also comes forth from

the Father, not begotten, but proceeding. This alone is God and alone is true God, the one Lord in a Trinity ofhypostases, undivided in nature, will, glory, power, energy, and all the characteristics of divinity.

Him alone shall you love and Him alone shall you worship with all your mind and with all your heart and with allyour strength. And His words and His commandments shall be in your heart so that you carry them out and meditateon them and speak of them both sitting and walking, lying down and standing up (cf Deut. 6:5, 6, 7). And you shallremember the Lord your God always and fear Him alone (cf Deut. 8:18; 6:13); and you shall not forget Him or Hiscommandments, for thus shall He give you strength to do His will. For He requires nothing else from you exceptthat you fear and love Him and walk in all His ways (cf. Deut. 10:12).

'He is your boast and He is your God' (cf. Deut. 10:21). When you hear of the impassible and invisible nature ofthe supramundane angels and of the wicked nature - wise, acute and extremely crafty in deceit - of him who fellaway from that realm, do not think that any such being is equal with God. Seeing the greatness of the heaven and itsmanifold motions, the sun's brilliance, the shining of the moon, the bright twinkle of the stars, the beneficial breezesof the air, the broad back of sea and land, do not make a god of any of them. For all are servants and creations of theone God, brought forth from non-being by His Logos. 'For He spake and they came into being; He commanded andthey were created' (Ps. 33:9. LXX). Him alone, therefore, the

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Master and Creator of all, you should glorify as God and through love you should cleave to Him; before Him youshould repent day and night for your deliberate and unintentional lapses. For 'He is compassionate and merciful,long-suffering and full of mercy' (Ps. 103:8) and eternally bountiful. He has promised and He actually gives acelestial, unending kingdom, a painless existence, an immortal life and unwanmg light for the delight of those whorevere and worship Him and who love and keep His commandments.

Yet God is also a 'jealous God' (Exod. 20:5), a just judge who takes terrible vengeance on those who dishonorHim, who disobey Him and who scorn His commandments, visiting them with eternal chastisement, unquenchablefire, unceasing pain, unconsolable affliction, a cloak of lugubrious darkness, an obscure and grievous region, piteousgnashing of teeth, venomous and sleepless worms - things He prepared for that first evil apostate together with allthose deluded by him who became his followers, rejecting their Creator in their actions, words and thoughts.

2. 'You shall not make an image of anything in the heavens above, or in the earth below, or in the sea' (cf Exod.20:4), in such a way that you worship these things and glorify them as gods. For all are the creations of the one God,created by Him in the Holy Spirit through His Son and Logos, who as Logos of God in these latter times took fleshfrom a virgin's womb, appeared on earth and associated with men (cf Baruch 3:37), and who for the salvation ofmen suffered, died and arose again, ascended with His body into the heavens and 'sat down on the right hand of theMajesty on High' (Heb. 1:3), and who will come again with His body to judge the living and the dead. Out of lovefor Him you should make, therefore, an icon of Him who became man for our sakes, and through His icon youshould bring Him to mind and worship Him, elevating your intellect through it to the venerable body of the Savior,that is set on the right hand of the Father in heaven.

In like manner you should also make icons of the saints and venerate them, not as gods - for this is forbidden - butbecause of the attachment, inner affection and sense of surpassing honor that you feel for the saints when by meansof their icons the intellect is raised up to them. It was in this spirit that Moses made icons of the Cherubim within theHoly of Holies (cf. Exod. 25:18). The Holy of Holies

itself was an image of things supracelestial (cf. Exod. 25:40;Heb. 8:5),

while the Holy Place was an image of the entire world. Moses called these things holy, not glorifying what iscreated, but thrown it glorifying God the Creator of the world. You must not, then, deiiy the icons of Christ and ofthe saints, but through them you should venerate Him who originally created us in His own image, and whosubsequently consented in His ineffable compassion to assume the human image and to be circumscribed by it.

You should venerate not only the icon of Christ, but also the similitude of His cross. For the cross is Christ's greatsign and trophy of victory over the devil and all his hostile hosts; for this reason they tremble and flee when they seethe figuration of the cross. This figure, even prior to the crucifixion, was greatly glorified by the prophets andwrought great wonders; and when He who was hung upon it, our Lord Jesus Christ, comes again to judge the livingand the dead, this His great and terrible sign will precede Him, full of power and glory (cf Matt. 24:30). So glorifythe cross now, so that you may boldly look upon it then and be glorified with it. And you should venerate icons ofthe saints, for the saints have been crucified with the Lord; and you should make the sign of the cross upon yourperson before doing so, bringing to mind their communion in the sufferings of Christ. In the same way you shouldvenerate their holy shrines and any relic of their bones; for God's grace is not sundered from these things, even asthe divinity was not sundered from Christ's venerable body at the time of His life-quickening death. By doing thisand by glorifying those who glorified God - for through their actions they showed themselves to be perfect in theirlove for God - you too will be glorified together with them by God, and with David you will chant: 'I have held Thyfriends in high honor, 0 Lord' (Ps. 159:17. LXX).

3. 'You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain' (Exod. 20:7), swearing an oath falsely because ofsome worldly thing, or out of human fear, or shame, or for personal gain. For a false oath is a denial of God. For thisreason you should not take an oath at all (cf. Matt. 5:34). Avoid oaths altogether, since through an oath a manforswears himself, and this estranges him from God and numbers him among the wrongdoers. If you are truthful inall your words, that will convey the certainty of an oath.' Should you, however, bind yourself with an

oath -something to be deprecated - you must fulfill it as a legal obligation, provided it involves something permitted bythe divine law; but you should hold yourself at fault because you swore at

all, and by acts of mercy, supplication, grief and bodily hardship you should ask Christ's forgiveness, since Hesaid you should not swear oaths. If, on the other hand, you take an oath that involves something that is unlawful,beware lest on account of your oath you do what is wrong and are numbered with Herod, the prophet-slayer (cf.Matt. 14:7-9). And when you have put that unlawful oath behind you, make it a rule never again to take an oath, andwith tears ask more intensely for God's forgiveness, using the remedies already mentioned.

4. One day of the week you should 'keep holy' (Exod. 20:8): that which is called the Lord's day, because it isconsecrated to the Lord, who on that day arose from the dead, disclosing and giving prior assurance of the generalresurrection, when every earthly activity will come to an end. And you must not engage in any worldly activity thatis not essential; and you must allow those who are under your authority and those who live with you to rest, so thattogether you may all glorify Him who redeemed us through His death and who arose from the dead and resurrectedour human nature with Himself. You should bring to mind the age to come and meditate upon all thecommandments and statutes of the Lord, and you should examine yourself to see whether you have transgressed oroverlooked any of them, and you should correct yourself in all ways. On this day you should go to the temple ofGod and attend the services held there and with sincere faith and a clean conscience you should receive the holybody and blood of Christ. You should make a beginning of a more perfect life and renew and prepare yourself forthe reception of the eternal blessings to come. For the sake of these same blessings you must not misuse materialthings on the other days of the week either; but on the Lord's day, so as to be constantly near to God, abstain from allactivities except those which are absolutely necessary and which you have to perform in order to live. God thusbeing your refuge, you will not be distracted, the fire of the passions will not bum you, and you will be free from theburden of sin. In this way you will sanctify the Sabbath, observing it by doing no evil deeds. To the Lord's day youshould join the days dedicated to the great feasts, doing the same things and abstaining from the same things.

5. 'Honour your father and your mother' (Exod. 20:12), for it is through them that God has brought you into thislife and they, after God, are the causes of your existence. Thus after God you should honor them and love them,provided that your love for them

strengthens your love for God. If it does not, flee from them, yet without feelings of hatred. Should they actuallybe a hindrance to you - especially with respect to the true and saving faith because they profess some other faith -you should not merely flee from them, but also hate them, and not them alone but all relatives and everyone elsebound to you by affection or other union, and, indeed, the very limbs of your body and their appetites, and yourbody itself and its bond with the passions. For 'if anyone does not hate his father and mother, and wife, and children,and brothers and sisters, and even his own life, and if he does not take up his cross and follow Me. he is not. worthyof Me', Christ said (cf Luke 14:26-27; Matt. 10:37). Such is the way in which you are to act towards your earthly

parents and your friends and brethren. But if they share your faith and do not hinder you in your quest for salvation,you should honor and love them.

If it is thus with natural fathers, how much more should you honor and love those who are your spiritual fathers.For they have brought you from a state of mere existence to a state of virtue and spiritual health; they havetransmitted to you the illumination of knowledge, have taught you the revelation of the truth, have given you rebirththrough the water of regeneration and have instilled in you the hope of resurrection and immortality, and of theeternal kingdom and inheritance. In this way they have converted you from being unworthy to being worthy ofeternal blessings, have transformed you from an earthly into a heavenly being, and have made you eternal instead oftemporal, a son and disciple not of a man, but of the God-man Jesus Christ, who bestowed upon you the Spirit ofadoption, and who told you not to call anyone on earth your father or teacher, because you have only one Father andTeacher, namely Christ (cf. Matt. 23:9-10). You must, therefore, render all honor and love to your spiritual fathers,since the honor rendered to them redounds to Christ and the all-holy Spirit, in whom you received adoption, and tothe heavenly Father, 'from whom derives all fatherhood in heaven and on earth' (Eph. 3:15) You should strive

tohave a spiritual father throughout your life and to confess to him every sin and every evil thought and to receivefrom him healing and remission. For they have been given the power to bind and to unbind souls, and whatever theybind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever they unbind on earth will be unbound in heaven (cf. Matt.18:18). This grace and power they have received from Christ, and so you should obey them and not

gainsay them, lest you bring destruction upon your soul. For if a person who gainsays his natural parents inmatters not interdicted by the divine law is - according to the law (cf Exod. 21: 17) - to be put to death, how will hewho contradicts his spiritual fathers not expel the Spirit of God from himself and destroy his soul? For this reason becounseled by your spiritual fathers and obey them till the end, so that you may save your soul and inherit eternal anduntarnished blessings.

6. 'You shall not be unchaste' (Exod. 20:14), lest instead of being united to Christ you become united to aprostitute (cf. 1 Cor. 6:15), severing yourself from the divine body, forfeiting the divine inheritance and throwingyourself into hell. According to the law (cf. Lev. 21:9), a daughter of a priest caught whoring is to be burnt, for shedishonors her father; how much more, then, does the person who defiles the body of Christ deserve endlesschastisement. If you are capable of it, embrace the path of virginity, so that you may become wholly God's and maycleave to Him with perfect love, all your life devoting yourself undistractedly to the Lord and to what belongs toHim (cf. 1 Cor. 7:32), and in this way anticipating the life to come and living as an angel of God on earth. For theangels are characterized by virginity and if you cleave to virginity you emulate them with your body, in so far as thisis possible. Or, rather, prior to them you emulate the Father who in virginity begot the Son before all ages, and alsothe virginal Son who in the beginning came forth from the virginal Father by way of generation, and in these lattertimes was bom in the flesh of a virginal Mother; you likewise emulate the Holy Spirit who ineffably proceeds fromthe Father alone, not by way of generation, but by procession. Hence if you practice true chastity in soul and body

you emulate God and are joined to Him in imperishable wedlock, embellishing

every sensation, word and thoughtwith virginal beauty.

If, however, you do not choose to live in virginity and have not promised God that you will do this, God's lawallows you to marry one woman and to live with her alone and to hold her in holiness as your own wife (cf. 1 Thess.4:4), abstaining entirely from other women. You can totally abstain from them if you shun untimely meetings withthem, do not indulge in lewd words and stories and, as far as you can, avoid looking at them with the eyes of bothbody and soul, training yourself not to gaze overmuch upon the beauty of their faces. For 'whoever looks at a womanwith lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart' (Matt. 5:28), and in this way he is

impure before Christ who sees his heart; and the next step is that he commits shameless acts with his body also.But why do I speak of fornication and adultery and other natural abominations? For by looking overfondly on thebeauty of bodies a person is dragged down unrestrainedly into lascivious acts contrary to all nature. Thus, if you cutaway from yourself the bitter roots, you will not reap the deadly harvest but, on the contrary, you will gather thefruits of chastity and the holiness which it confers, and without which 'no one will see the Lord' (Heb. 12:14).

7. 'You shall not kilF (Exod. 20:15), lest you forfeit the adoption of Him who quickens even the dead, andbecause of your actions are adopted instead by the devil, who was 'a murderer from the beginning' (John 8:44). Asmurder results from a blow, a blow from an insult, an insult from anger, and we are roused to anger becausesomeone else injures, hits or insults us, for this reason Christ told us not to stop anyone who took our coat fromtaking our shirt also (cf Luke 6:29); and we must not strike back at him who strikes us, or revile him who reviles us.In this manner we will free from the crime of murder both our self and him who does us wrong. Further, we will beforgiven our sins, since He says, 'Forgive and you will be forgiven' (cf. Matt. 6:14). But the person who speaks andacts evilly will be condemned to eternal chastisement. For Christ said, 'Whoever shall say to his brother " You fool"shall be guilty enough to go to the hell of fire' (Matt. 5:22). If, then, you can eradicate this evil, calling down uponyour soul the benediction of gentleness, then glorify Christ, the teacher and ministrant of every

virtue, withoutwhom, as we have been taught, we can do nothing good (cf. John 15:5). But if you are unable to bridle your temper,censure yourself whenever you lose it, and repent before God and before anyone to whom you have spoken or haveacted evilly. If you repent at the inception of sin you will not commit the sin itself; but if you feel no pang incommitting minor offences you will through them fall into major transgressions.

8. 'You shall not steal' (Exod. 20:15), lest He who knows things secret increases your punishment because youhave set Him at naught. Rather you should secretly give from what you have to those in need, so that you receivefrom God, who sees in secret, a hundred times more, as well as life eternal in the age to come (cf. Matt. 6:4; Mark10:30).

9. 'You shall not accuse anyone falsely' (cf. Exod. 20:16), lest you

become like the devil, who falsely accused God to Eve and was cursed by God (cf. Gen. 3:14). Rather, youshould conceal your neighbor's offence, unless by so doing others may be injured; and in this way you will imitatenot Ham, but Shem and Japheth, and so like them receive the blessing (cf. Gen. 9:25-7).

10. 'You shall not covet anything belonging to your neighbor' (cf. Exod 20:17), neither his land, nor his money,nor his glory, nor anything that is his. For covetousness, conceived in the soul, produces sin; and sin, whencommitted, results in death (cf. Jas. 1:15). Refrain, then, from coveting what belongs to others and, so far as youcan, avoid filching things out of greediness. Rather you should give from what you possess to whoever asks of you,and you should, as much as you can, be charitable to whoever is in need of charity, and you should not refusewhoever wants to borrow from you (cf Matt. 5:42). Should you find some lost article, you should keep it for itsowner, even though he is hostilely disposed towards you; for in this way you will change him and will overcomeevil with good, as Christ commands (cf. Rom. 12:21).

If you observe these things with all your strength and live in accordance with them, you will store up in your soulthe treasures of holiness, you will please God, you will be rewarded by God and by those who are godly, and youwill inherit eternal blessings. May we all receive such blessings through the grace

and compassion of our Lord, Godand Savior Jesus Christ, to whom with His unorigmate Father and the all-holy, bountiful and life-quickening Spiritare due all glory, honor and worship, now and ever and through all the ages. Amen.

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A Question Posed to Him

You have done well, father, to quote the words of the saints regarding the subject of my query. For as I heard youresolve my difficulties, I marveled at the clarity of the truth; but it also entered my mind that since - as you yourselfsaid - every word fights with another word, there may be grounds for contradicting what you have said. Yet becauseI recognize that only by their fruits can we know things unquestionably, and because I have heard the saints sayingexactly the same as you, I am no longer anxious on this score. Indeed, how can a man who is not convinced by thesaints be worthy of credence? And how will such a person not reject also the God of the saints? For it is God whosaid with respect to the apostles and, through them, to the saints who succeeded them, 'He who rejects you, rejectsMe' (Luke 10:16), which is to say that he rejects Truth itself. How, then, can the enemy of truth be accepted bythose who seek the truth? Hence I entreat you, father, to listen as I recount each of the other points that I heard fromthose who pass their life in the pursuit of profane learning, and I beg you to tell me some of your thoughts on thesematters, adding also what the saints say about them. For they maintain that we are wrong in striving to enclose our

intellect within our body. Rather, they say, we should alienate it by any means possible from the body. They activelymock some of those among us, writing against us on the grounds that we counsel those newly embarked on thespiritual path to direct their gaze upon themselves and to draw their intellect into themselves by means of theirbreathing. Our critics claim that the intellect is not separate from the soul; and since it is not separate, they say, butincluded in the soul, how is it possible to reintroduce it into

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oneself? Further, they report us as saying that we intromit divine grace through the nostrils. As I have never heardany of those among us say this, I know that we are being misrepresented; and this has made me realize that theirother charges are also malicious. People who fabricate false charges can also deal falsely with realities. Yet, father, Iwould ask you to teach me why we devote such care to inducing our intellect to come back into ourselves and do notthink it wrong to enclose it within the body.

Answer

That it is not wrong for those who have chosen a hfe of self-attentiveness and stillness to strive to keep their

intellect within their body.

1. Brother, do you not recall St Paul's statements, 'Our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit within us' (cf. 1 Cor.6:19), and, 'We are the house of God' (cf. Heb. 3:6), as God Himself confirms when He says, 'I will dwell in themand walk in them, and I will be their God' (Lev. 26:12; 2 Cor. 6:16)? Since, then, the body is God's dwelling-place,what sane person would object to his intellect dwelling in it? And how was it that God established the intellect in thebody to start with? Did He do so wrongly? These are the things we should say to the heretics, to those who declarethat the body is evil and created by the devil. But we regard it as evil for the intellect to be caught up in materialthoughts, not for it to be in the body, for the body is not evil. Hence everyone who devotes his life to God calls toHim as David did: 'My soul has thirsted for Thee, how often has my flesh longed for Thee' (Ps. 63:1), and: 'My heartand my flesh have rejoiced in the living God' (Ps. 84:2. LXX); and he says with Isaiah: 'My belly shall sound as aharp and my inward parts as a brazen wall that Thou hast restored' (cf. Isa. 16:11. LXX), and: 'Out of awe for Thee,0 Lord, we are pregnant with the Spirit of Thy salvation' (Isa. 26:18. LXX). Filled with courage by this Spirit, wewill not fall; but it is those who speak in a materialistic way, and who pretend that celestial words and citizenship arematerialistic, that will fall.

Although St Paul called the body 'death' when he said, 'Who will

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Answer

deliver me from the body 'of this death?' (Rom. 7 ; 24), this is simply because the materialistic, carnal mentality isbody-like, and so he rightly called it a body when comparing it to the spiritual and divine mind. Further, he did notsay simply 'body' but 'death of the body'. Shortly before this he clarifies his meaning when he says that the flesh isnot at fault, but the sinful impulse that infiltrates into the flesh because of the fall. 'I am sold', he says, 'into slaveryunder sin' (Rom. 7:14); but he who is sold is not a slave by nature. And again he says, 'I know that in me - that is, inmy flesh - there dwells nothing good' (Rom. 7:18). Note that he does not say the flesh is evil, but that which dwellstherein. Thus it is evil for this 'law that is in our bodily members, warring against the law of the intellect' (cf. Rom.7:23) - to dwell in the body, not for the intellect to dwell there.

2. That is why we grapple with this 'law of sin' (Rom. 8 : 2) and expel it from our body, establishing in its placethe surveillance of the intellect. Through this surveillance we prescribe what is fitting for every faculty of the souland every member of the body. For the senses we prescribe what they should take into account and to what extentthey should do so, and this exercise of the spiritual law is called self-control. To the aspect of the soul that isaccessible to passion we impart the best of all dispositions, that of love; and we also raise the level of theintelligence by repelling whatever impedes the mind in its ascent towards God: this aspect of the law we callwatchfulness. When through self-control we have purified our body, and when through divine love we have madeour mcensive power and our desire incentives for virtue, and when we offer to God an intellect cleansed by prayer,then we will possess and see within ourselves the grace promised to the pure in heart (cf. Matt. 5:8). Then, too, wewill be able to affirm with St Paul: 'The God who said, "Out of darkness let light shine", has made this light shine inour hearts, to give us the illumination of the knowledge of God's glory in the Person of Jesus Christ' (2 Cor. 4:6).'But we have', he says, 'this treasure in earthen vessels' (2 Cor. 4:7). Since, therefore, we carry as in earthen vessels -that is to say, in our bodies - the Father's Light in the Person of Jesus Christ, and so can experience the glory of theHoly Spirit, are we doing anything unworthy of the intellect's nobility if we retain it within our body? What personof spiritual insight - and, indeed, what person endowed with human intelligence, even though bereft of divine grace -would say such a thing?

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Answer

3. Since our soul is a single entity possessing many powers, it utilizes as an organ the body that by nature lives inconjunction with it. What organs, then, does the power of the soul that we call 'intellect' make use of when it is

active? No one has ever supposed that the mind resides in the finger-nails or the eye-lashes, the nostrils or the lips.But we all agree that it resides within us, even though we may not all agree as to which of our inner organs it chieflymakes use of. For some locate it in the head, as though in a sort of acropolis; others consider that its vehicle is thecentemiost part of the heart, that aspect of the heart that has been purified from natural life. We know very well thatour intelligence is neither within us as in a container - for it is incorporeal - nor yet outside us, for it is united to us;but it is located in the heart as in its own organ. And we-know this because we are taught it not by men but by theCreator of man Himself when He says, 'It is not that which goes into man's mouth that defiles him, but what comesout of it' (Matt. 15:11), adding, 'for thoughts come out of the heart' (Matt. 15:19). St Makarios the Great says thesame: 'The heart rules over the whole human organism, and when grace takes possession of the pastures of the heart,it reigns over all a man's thoughts and members. For the intellect and all the thoughts of the soul are located there.'

Our heart is, therefore, the shrine of the intelligence and the chief intellectual organ of the body. When, therefore,we strive to scrutinize and to amend our intelligence through rigorous watchfulness, how could we do this if we didnot collect our intellect, outwardly dispersed through the senses, and bring it back within ourselves - back to theheart itself, the shrine of the thoughts? It is for this reason that St Makarios - rightly called blessed - directly afterwhat he says above, adds: 'So it is there that we must look to see whether grace has inscribed the laws of the Spirit.'Where? In the ruling organ, in the throne of grace, where the intellect and all the thoughts of the soul reside, that isto say, in the heart. Do you see, then, how greatly necessary it is for those who have chosen a life of self-attentiveness and stillness to bring their intellect back and to enclose it within their body, and particularly within thatinnermost body within the body

that we call the heart?

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Answer

4. If, as the Psalmist says, 'AH the glory of the king's daughter is within' (Ps. 45:13. LXX), how shall we seek itsomewhere without? And if, as St Paul says, 'God has sent forth His Spirit into our hearts, crying: "Abba Father" '(cf. Gal. 4:6). how shall we not pray in union with the Spirit that is in our hearts? And if, as the Lord of the prophetsand the apostles says, 'The kingdom of heaven is within us' (cf. Luke 17:21), how shall we not find ourselves outsidethe kingdom of heaven if we strive to alienate our intellect from what lies within us? 'An upright heart', saysSolomon, 'seeks conscious awareness' (cf. Prov. 27:21. LXX), the awareness or perception which he elsewhere callsnoetic and divine (cf. Prov. 2:5. LXX). It is to such awareness that the fathers urge all of us when they say: 'A noeticintellect assuredly acquires noetic awareness. Let us never cease from seeking for this, which is both in us and not inus." Do you not see that whether we wish to withstand sin, or to acquire virtue, or to gain the reward of the contestfor virtue or, rather, the noetic awareness which is the pledge of the reward for virtue, we have to bring our intellectback into our body and into ourselves? On the other hand, to extract the intellect not from a materialistic manner ofthought but from the body itself, in the hope that there, outside the body, it may attain noetic visions, is the worst ofprofane delusions, the root and source of every heresy, an invention of demons, a doctrine engendering folly anditself the result of dementedness. It is for this reason that those who speak by the inspiration of the demons are out of

their wits and do not even comprehend what they say. But we, on the contrary, install our intellect not only withinthe body and the heart, but also within itself.

5. Those who claim that the intellect is never separate from the soul, but is always within it, assert consequentlythat it is not possible to reinstall it in this way. They are ignorant, it seems, that the essence of the intellect is onething and its energy is another. Or, rather, although they know this, they deliberately side with the deceivers, makingplay with verbal equivocations. 'By not accepting the

simplicity of spiritual teaching,' says St Basil the Great, 'thesepeople whose wits are sharpened for disputation by dialectic pervert the power of the truth with the counter-arguments of spurious knowledge (cf. 1 Tim. 6:20)

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Answer

and with sophistic plausibilities.' Such inevitably is the character of those who, without being spiritual, thinkthemselves competent to judge and give instruction in spiritual matters (cf 1 Cor. 2:14-15). It should not haveescaped them that the intellect is not like the eye which sees other visible things but does not see itself. On thecontrary the intellect functions, first, by observing things other than itself, so far as this is necessary; and this is whatSt Dionysios the Great calls the intellect's 'direct movement'. Secondly, it returns to itself and operates within itself,and so beholds itself; and this is called by St Dionysios the intellect's 'circular movement'. This is the intellect'shighest and most befitting activity and, through it, it even transcends itself and is united with God. 'For the intellect,'writes St Basil, 'when not dispersed outwardly' - note that it does go out from itself; and so, having gone out, it mustfind a way to return inwards - 'returns to itself, and through itself ascends to God' in a way that is free from delusion.St Dionysios, the unerring beholder of noetic things, also says that this circular movement of the intellect is notsubject to delusion.

6. The father of error, ever desirous of seducing man from this ascent and of leading him to that form of actionwhich permits the devil to insinuate his delusions, has not found until now, so far as we know, a helper who withfair-sounding words would aid and abet him in achieving this. But now, if what you tell me is correct, it seems thathe has discovered collaborators who write treatises which lead to this very thing and who endeavor to persuadepeople, including those who have embraced the sublime life of stillness, that during prayer it is better to keep theintellect outside the body. They do not respect even the definitive and unambiguous statement of St John Klimakos,who with his words constructed the ladder leading to heaven: 'A hesychast is one who tries to enshrine what isbodiless within his body.' And our spiritual fathers have rightly taught us things in harmony with this. For if thehesychast does not enclose his

intellect within his body, how can he possess within himself the One who is investedwith the body and who as its natural form penetrates all structurally organized

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Answer

matter? The determined exterior aspect of this matter - the material body - cannot enshrine the essence of theintellect until the material body itself truly lives by adopting a form of life appropriate to union with the intellect.

7. Do you see, brother, how St John has shown, not simply from the spiritual but even from a human point ofview, how vital it is/or those who seek to be true masters of themselves, and to be monks according to their innerself, to install or possess the intellect within the body? Nor is it out of place to teach beginners in particular to lookwithin themselves and to bring their mtellect within themselves by means of their breathing. For no one of soundjudgment would prevent a person who has not yet achieved a true knowledge of himself from concentrating hisintellect within himself with the aid of certain methods. Since the intellect of those recently embarked on thespiritual path continually darts away again as soon as it has been concentrated, they must continually bring it backonce more; for in their inexperience they are unaware that of all things it is the most difficult to observe and themost mobile. That is why some teachers recommend them to pay attention to the exhalation and inhalation of theirbreath, and to restrain it a little, so that while they are watching it the intellect, too, may be held in check. This theyshould do until they advance with God's help to a higher stage and are able to prevent their intellect from going outto external things, to keep it uncompounded, and to gather it into what St Dionysios calls a state of 'unifiedconcentration'. This control of the breathing may, indeed, be regarded as a spontaneous consequence', of payingattention to the intellect; for the breath is always quietly inhaled and exhaled at moments of intense concentration,especially in the case of those who practice stillness both bodily and mentally. Such people keep the Sabbath in aspiritual fashion and, so far as is possible, they rest from all personal activities; they strip their soul's powers freefrom every transient, fleeting and compound form of [knowledge, from

every type of sense-perception and, ingeneral, from every bodily act that is under our sway, and, so far as they can, even from those not entirely under oursway, such as breathing.

8. In those who have made progress in stillness all these things

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Answer

come to pass without toil awl anxious care, few of necessity they spontaneously follow upon the soul's perfectentry into itself. But where beginners are concerned none of them can be achieved without effort. Patient enduranceis the fruit of love, for 'love patiently accepts all things' (1 Cor. 13:7), and teaches us to achieve such endurance byforcing ourselves so that through patience we may attain love; and this is a case in point. But what need is there tosay anything more about this? Everyone possessing experience can but laugh when contradicted by those who lack

experience; for such a person is taught not by argument but by the exertions he makes and the experience that comesfrom these exertions. It is from experience that we reap what is profitable, and it is experience that refutes thefruitless arguments of contentious braggarts.

A great teacher has said that after the fall our inner being naturally adapts itself to outward forms. When, then,someone is striving to concentrate his intellect in himself so that it functions, not according to the direct form ofmovement but according to the circular, delusion-free form, how could he not gain mimensely if. instead of lettinghis gaze flit hither and thither, he fixes it upon his chest or his navel as upon a point of support? Outwardly curlinghimself- so far as is possible - into the form of a circle, in conformity with the mode of action that he tries toestablish in his intellect, he also, through this same position of his body, sends into his heart the power of theintellect that is dispersed outwardly when his gaze is turned outward. If the power of the noetic demon resides in thenavel of the belly, since there the law of sin exercises its dominion and provides him with fodder, why should we notestablish there also the law of the intellect that, armed with prayer, contends against that dominion (cf. Rom. 7:23)?Then the evil spirit

expelled through our baptism - 'the water of regeneration' (Tit. 3:5) - will not return with sevenother spirits more wicked than himself and again take up residence in us, so that 'the last state is worse than the first'(Luke 11:26).

9. 'Be attentive to yourself,' says Moses (Deut. 15:9. LXX) - that is, to the whole of yourself, not to a few thingsthat pertain to you, neglecting the rest. By what means? With the intellect assuredly, for nothing else can payattention to the whole of yourself. Set this guard, therefore, over your soul and body, for thereby you will readilyfree yourself from the evil passions of body and soul. Take yourself in hand, then, be attentive to yourself, scrutinizeyourself; or, rather, guard.

watch over and test yourself, for in this manner you will subdue your rebellious unregenerate self to the Spirit andthere will never again be 'some secret iniquity in your heart' (Deut. 15:9). If, says, the Preacher, the spirit that-rulesover the evil demons and passions rises up against you, do not desert your place (cf, Eccles. 10:4) - that is to say, donot leave any part of your soul or body unwatched. In this way you will master the evil spirits that assail you andyou will boldly present yourself to Him who examines hearts and minds (cf. Ps. 7:9); and He will not scrutinize you,for you will have already scrutinized yourself. As St Paul says, 'If we judged ourselves we would not be judged' (1Cor. 11:31).

Then you will experience the blessing that David experienced, and you will say to God, 'Darkness will not bedarkness with Thee and night shall be bright as day for me, for Thou hast taken possession of my mind' (cf. Ps.139:12-13). It is as if David were saying that not only has God become the sole object of his soul's desire, but alsothat any spark of this desire in his body has returned to the soul that produced it, and through the soul has risen toGod, hangs upon Him and cleaves to Him. For just as those who cleave to the perishable pleasures of the senses

expend all the soul's desire in satisfying their fleshly proclivities and become so entirely materialistic that the Spiritof God cannot abide in them (cf. Gen. 6:3), so

in the case of those who have elevated their intellect to God, and whothrough divine longing have attached their soul to Him, the flesh is also transformed, is exalted with the soul,communes together with the soul in the Divine, and itself likewise becomes the possession and dwellmg-place ofGod, no longer harboring any enmity towards Him or any desires that are contrary to the Spirit (cf. Gal. 5:17).

10. Which is the place - the flesh or the intellect - most expedient for the spirit of evil that rises up against us frombelow? Is it not the flesh, in which St Paul says that there is nothing good (cf. Rom. 7:18) until the law of life makesits habitation there? It is on account of this especially that the flesh must never escape our attention. How can itbecome our own? How can we avoid abandoning it? How can we repulse the devil's assault upon it - especially wewho do not yet know how to contend spiritually with the spiritual forces of wickedness - unless we train ourselves topay attention to ourselves also with respect to the outward positioning of the body? But why do I speak of thosenewly engaged in spiritual warfare when there are more perfect

people, not only after Christ's incarnation but also before it, who during prayer have adopted this outwardpositioning of the body and to whom the Deity readily hearkened? Elijah himself, pre-eminent among spiritualvisionaries, leaned his head upon his knees, and having in this manner assiduously gathered his intellect into itselfand into God he put an end to the drought that had lasted many years (cf. 1 Kgs. 18:42-45). But it seems to me,brother, that these men from whom you say you heard such slanders suffer from the illness of the Pharisees: theyrefuse to examine and cleanse the inside of the cup - that is to say, their heart - and not being grounded in thetraditions of the fathers they try to assume precedence over everyone, as new teachers of the law (Matt. 23:25-26).They disdain the form of prayer that God vindicated in the case of the publican, and they exhort others who pray notto adopt it. For the Lord says in the Gospel that the publican 'would not even lift his eyes to heaven' (Luke 18:13).Those who when praying turn their gaze on themselves are trying to imitate the publican; yet their critics call

them'navel-psychics', with the clear intention of slandering them. For who among the people who pray in this way hasever said that the soul is located in the navel?

11. These critics, then, are evident calumniators; indeed, so far from healing those in error, they revile those whoshould be praised. They write not for the sake of truth and the life of stillness, but out of self-flattery; not in order tolead men towards spiritual watchfulness, but in order to draw them away from it. For they do all they can to discreditboth the practice of hesychasm and those who engage in it in the appropriate manner. They would readily describeas belly-psychics those who said: 'The law of God is in the centre of my belly' (cf. Ps. 40:8. LXX), and: 'My bellyshall sound as a harp and my inward parts as a brazen wall that Thou hast restored' (cf. Isa. 16:11. LXX). In generalthey slander all those who use corporeal symbols to represent, name and search out things noetic, divine andspiritual. Yet in spite of this they will inflict no injury on those whom they misrepresent or, rather, because of theirattacks the saints will receive more blessings and still greater rewards in heaven, while then" opponents will remain

outside the sacred veils, unable to gaze upon even the shadows of the truth. It is, indeed, greatly to be feared thatthey will be punished eternally, for not only have they separated themselves from the saints, but they have alsoinveighed against them by their words.

Answer

12. You know the life of Symeon the New Theologian, and how it was all virtually a miracle, glorified by Godthrough supernatural miracles. You know also his writings, which without exaggeration one can call writings of life.In addition, you know of St Nikiphoros, how he passed many years in quietness and stillness and how hesubsequently withdrew into the most isolated parts of the Holy Mountain of Athos and devoted himself to gatheringtexts of the holy fathers concerned with the practice of watchfulness, thus passing this practice on to us. These twosaints clearly teach those who have chosen this way of life the

practices which, you report, are now under attack. Butwhy do I refer to saints of past times? For shortly before our own day men of attested sanctity, recognized asendowed with the power of the Holy Spirit, have transmitted these things to us by their own mouths. You have heardof Theoliptos, whose name signifies 'inspired by God' and who is recognized in our days as an authentic theologianand a trustworthy visionary of the truth of God's mysteries - the bishop of Philadelphia or, rather, he who fromPhiladelphia as from a lampstand illumined the world. You have heard also of Athanasios, who for not a few yearsadorned the patriarchal throne and whose tomb God has honored: and of Neilos of Italy, the emulator of the greatNeilos; of Seliotis and Ilias, who were in no wise inferior to Neilos; and of Gabriel and Athanasios, who wereendowed with the gift of prophecy. You have certainly heard of all these men and of many others who lived beforethem, with them and after them, all of whom exhort and encourage those wishing to embrace this tradition - thistradition which the new doctors of hesychia, who have no idea of the life of stillness and who instruct not fromexperience but through spurious argument, try to repudiate, deform and disparage, all to no

profit for their hearers. We, however, have spoken in person with some of these saints and they have been ourteachers. Are we, then, to count as nothing these people who have been taught by experience and grace, and tosubmit ourselves to those who assume the role of teachers out of conceit and in a spirit of contention? This we willnever, never do. And you, too, should turn away from them, wisely repeating to yourself the words of David, 'Bless

the Lord, 0 my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name' (Ps. 103;1). Guided by the fathers, take note howthey urge us always to bring our intellect back into ourselves.

1. Because the Deity is goodness itself, true mercy and an abyss of loving bounty - or, rather. He is that whichembraces and contains this abyss, since He transcends every name that is named (cf Eph. 1:21) and everything wecan conceive - we can receive mercy only by union with Him. We unite ourselves to Him, in so far as this ispossible, by participating in the godlike virtues and by entering into communion with Him through prayer andpraise. Because the virtues are similitudes of God, to participate in them puts us in a fit state to receive the Deity, yetit does not actually unite us to Him. But prayer through its sacral and hieratic power actualizes our ascent to andunion with the Deity, for it is a bond between noetic creatures and their Creator. Or at least this happens when ourprayer, through its fervent compunction, transcends the passions and conceptual thoughts; for the intellect, whilestill passion-dominated, cannot be united to God. Thus so long as the intellect when praying remains in a passion-charged state, it will not obtain mercy; but to the extent that it can dispel distractive thoughts it will experienceinward grief, and in so far as it experiences such grief it will partake of God's mercy. And if with humility itcontinues to savor this mercy it will transform entirely the aspect of the soul that is accessible to passion.

2. When the intellect's oneness becomes threefold, yet remains single, then it is united with the divine TriadicUnity, and it closes the door to every form of delusion and is raised above the flesh, the world and the prince of theworld. As the intellect thus escapes the grip of these enemies, it finds itself in itself and in God; and for as long as itabides in this state it delights in the sense of spiritual jubilation that springs up within it. The intellect's onenessbecomes threefold, yet remains single, when it reverts to itself and through itself ascends to God. The intellect'sreturn to itself is its own self-guarding, while its

ascent to God is initiated through prayer, prayer that is succinct, although at times it may be more lengthy inform, which requires more effort. If you persist in concentrating your intellect in this way and in raising it uptowards the Deity, and in forcibly restraining the mind's propensity to stray hither and thither, you will drawnoetically close to God. will reap things ineffable, taste the age to come, and by noetic perception will know that theLord is fall of bounty, in accordance with the Psalmist's words, 'Taste and know that the Lord is bountiful'

(Ps.34:8). It is, perhaps, not very difficult for the intellect to find itself in the threefold state - for it itself to be, that is to

say, both the guard, that which is guarded, and that which prays while it is keeping guard; but it is extremelydifficult to persevere for a long time in this state that gives birth to things ineffable, for the effort involved inacquiring every other virtue is slight and altogether easy to sustain when compared with this. Hence many, unable toendure the self-constraint needed for acquiring the virtue of prayer, do not attain a plenitude of divine gifts; butthose who do persist are rewarded with greater manifestations of divine aid, which sustain, support and joyfullycarry them forward. Then what is difficult to accomplish is easily achieved, for they are invested with what onemight call an angelic capacity, which empowers our human nature to commune with what lies beyond it. Thisaccords with the words of the prophet, that those who persist will grow wings and will gain new strength (cf Isa.40:31).

3. The intellectual activity consisting of thought and intuition is called intellect, and the power that activatesthought and intuition is likewise the intellect; and this power Scripture also calls the heart. It is because the intellectis pre-eminent among our inner powers that our soul is deiform. In those devoted to prayer, and especially to thesingle-phrased Jesus Prayer, the intellect's noetic activity is easily ordered and purified; but the power that producesthis activity cannot be purified unless all the soul's other powers are also purified. For the soul is a single entitypossessing many powers. Thus if one of its powers is vitiated the whole of it is denied; for since the soul is single,the evil in one of its powers is communicated to alt the rest Now since each of the soul's powers produces a differentenergy, it is possible that with diligence one of these energies might be temporarily purified; but the power inquestion will not therefore be pure, since it communes with all the rest and so it remains impure rather than pure.Suppose, then.

that a person has purified his intellectual energy through diligence in prayer, and has been to a certain extentenlightened either by the light of knowledge or in addition by noetic illumination: if he considers himself for thisreason to be pure he deceives himself and is utterly mistaken, and through his presumption he

throws wide open adoor into himself for the devil, who always strives to delude us human beings. But if he recognizes his heart'simpurity, and is not filled with pride because of the partial degree of purity he has attained, but uses it as an aid, thenhe will see more clearly the impurity of the other powers of his soul and will progress in humility, his inward griefwill grow and he will find suitable ways of healing each of his soul's powers. He will cleanse its moral aspect withthe right kind of ascetic practice, its power of spiritual apperception with spiritual knowledge, its power ofcontemplation with prayer, and in this way he will attain perfect, true and enduring purity of heart and intellect - apurity that no one can ever experience except through perfection in the ascetic life, persistent practice,contemplation and contemplative prayer.

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St Gregory PalamasTopics of Natural and Theological Science and on the Moral and Ascetic Life:

One Hundred and Fifty Texts

1. That the world has an origin nature teaches and history confirms, while the discoveries of the arts, theinstitution of laws and the constitution of states also clearly affirm it. We know who are the founders of nearly allthe arts, the lawgivers and those who established states, and indeed we know what has been written about the originof everything. Yet we see that none of this surpasses the account of the genesis of the world and of time as narratedby Moses. And Moses, who wrote about the genesis of the world, has so irrefutably substantiated the tnith of whathe writes through such extraordinary actions and words that he has convinced virtually the whole human race andhas persuaded them to deride those who sophistically teach the contrary. Since the nature of this world is such thateverything in it requires a specific cause in each instance, and since without such a cause nothing can exist at all, thevery nature of things demonstrates that there must be a first principle which is self-existent and does not derive fromany other principle.

2. That the world not only has an origin but also will have a consummation is affirmed by the fact that all thingsin it are contingent, and indeed it is partially coming to an end all the time. Moreover, sure and irrefutable assuranceof this is furnished by the prophecy both of those inspired by God and of Christ Himself, the God of all; and notonly the pious but also the impious must believe that what

they say is true, since everyone can see that what theypredicted about other things has proved correct. From them we leam that the world will not lapse entirely into non-being but, like our bodies and in a manner analogous to what will happen to us, it will be changed by the

power of the Holy Spirit, being dissolved and transformed into something more divine.

3. The ancient Greek sages say that the heavens revolve in accordance with the nature of the world soul, and thatthey teach justice and reason. What sort of justice? What kind of reason? For if the heavens revolve not by virtue oftheir own nature but by virtue of the nature of what they call the world soul, and if this world soul belongs to theentire world, how is it that the earth and the water and the air do not also revolve? Yet though in their opinion thesoul is ever-moving, none the less the earth is stationary by nature, and so is water, which occupies the lower region,whereas the heavens, which occupy the upper region, are by nature ever in motion and move in a circle. But what isthe character of this world soul by virtue of whose nature the heavens revolve? Is it endowed with intelligence? Ifso, it must be self-determining, and so it would not always move the celestial body in the same way, for what is self-determining moves differently at different times. And what trace of deifomi soul do we observe in the lowermostsphere - the sphere of the earth - or in the elements most proximate to it, namely those of water, air, and even fireitself, for the world soul supposedly pertains to them as well? And again, how in their opinion are some thingsanimate and others inanimate? And among inanimate things it turns out that not merely a few examples taken at

random but every stone, every piece of metal, all earth, water, air and fire, moves by virtue of its own nature and notby virtue of a soul; for they admit that this is true even of fire. Yet if the soul is common to all, how is it that onlythe heavens move by virtue of the nature of this soul and not by virtue of their own nature? And how in their viewcan the soul that moves the celestial body be void of

intelligence since according to them it is the source of oursouls? But if it is void of intelligence it must be either sentient or vegetative. We observe, however, that no soulmoves a body without the assistance of organs, and we cannot observe any such organ that specifically serves theearth, or the heavens, or any of the other element contained within them; for every organ is composed of variousnatures, while the elements severally, and above all the heavens, are simple and not composite. The soul is theactuality of a body possessing organs and having the potentiality for life; but the heavens, since they have nomember or part that can serve as an organ, have no potentiality for life. How, then, can that which is incapable oflife possibly have a soul? But

those who have become 'vain in their reasonings' have invented 'out of their foolish hearts' (Rom. 1:21) a worldsoul that does not exist, never has existed, and never will exist. Yet they claim that this soul is the demiurge andgovernor and controller of the entire sensible world and, farther, that it is some sort of root and source of our soulsor, rather, of every soul. Moreover, they say that it is bom from the intellect, and that the intellect is other insubstance than the supreme Intellect which they call God. Such doctrines are taught by those among them mostproficient in wisdom and theology, but they are no better than men who deify wild beasts and stones. In fact theirreligiosity is much worse, for beasts, gold, stone and bronze are real things, even though they are among the least ofcreatures; but the star-bearing world soul neither exists, nor is it anything real, for it is nothing at all but theinvention of an evil mind.

4. Since, they say, the celestial body must be in motion, and there is no place to which it can advance, it turnsabout itself and thus its 'advancement' is that of rotation. Well and good. So if there were a place, it would moveupwards, like fire, and more so than fire since it is by nature lighter than fire. Yet this movement is due not to thenature of a soul but to that of lightness. Thus if the heavens' motion is rotational, and this motion exists by virtue oftheir own nature, and not that of the soul, then the celestial body revolves not by virtue of the nature of the soul butby virtue of its own nature. Hence it does not possess a

soul, nor is there any such thing as a celestial or pancosmicsoul. The only soul that possesses intelligence is the human soul, and this is not celestial, but supracelestial, notbecause of its location but because of its very nature, for its essence is noetic.

5. The celestial body does not move forward or upward. The reason for this is not that there is no place beyond it.For adjacent to the heavens and enclosed within them is the sphere of ether, and this too does not advance upward,not because there is no place to which it might proceed - for the breadth of the heavens embraces it - but becausewhat is above is lighter. Hence, the heavens are by their own nature higher than the sphere of ether. It is not becausethere is no place higher that the heavens do not proceed upward, but because there is no body more subtle and light

than they are.

6. No body is higher than the celestial body. Yet this is not to say that the region beyond the heavens does notadmit a body, but only that the heavens contain every body and there is no other body

beyond. But if a body could pass beyond the heavens, which is our pious belief, then the region beyond theheavens would not be inaccessible. God, who fills all things and extends infinitely beyond the heavens, existedbefore the world, filling as He now fills the whole region of the world. Yet this did not prevent a body from existingin that region. Thus even outside of the heavens there is nothing to prevent the existence of a region, such as thatwhich surrounds the world or as that which is in the world, in which a body could abide.

7. Since there is no such hindrance, how is it, then, that the celestial body does not move upwards, but turningback upon itself moves in a circular fashion? Because, as it is the lightest of bodies, it rises to the surface of all theothers and is the highest of them all, as well .as being the most mobile. Just as what is most compressed and mostheavy is the lowest and most stationary, so what is more

ranfied and lightest is the highest and most mobile. Thussince the celestial body moves by nature above the level of all other bodies, and since by nature it is impossible for itto separate itself from those things on the surface of which it is located, and since those things on which it is locatedare spherical, it must encircle them unceasingly. And this it does not by virtue of the nature of a soul but by virtue ofits own proper nature as a body, since it passes successively from place to place, which is the movement mostcharacteristic of the highest bodies, just as a stationary state most characterizes the lowest bodies.

8. It may be observed that in the regions close about us the winds, whose nature it is to rise upwards, move aboutthese regions without separating themselves from them and without proceeding further in an upward direction. Thisis not because there is no place for them to rise to, but because what is above the winds is lighter than they are. Theyremain on the surface of the regions above which they are situated because by nature they are lighter than thoseregions. And they move around those regions by virtue of their own nature and not that of a soul. I think thatSolomon, wise in all things, intended to indicate this partial likeness that the winds bear to the celestial body whenhe applied the same kind of language to the winds as is used of it; for he wrote, 'The wind proceeds circle-wise, andreturns on its own circuits' (Eccles. 1:6). But the nature of the winds round about us diners from the nature of higherbodies, in that the winds' motion is slower and they are more heavy.

9. According to the Greek sages, there are two opposing zones of

the earth that are temperate and habitable, and each of these is divided into two inhabited regions, thus makingfour in all. Therefore they assert that there are also four races of men upon the earth, and that these are unable tohave any contact with one another. There are, according to these philosophers, men living in the temperate zonelateral to us, who are separated from us by the torrid zone. And there are people who dwell antipodal to these latter,living from their point of view beneath the temperate zone and its inhabitants. In a similar way there are

those whodwell beneath us. The first they say are opposite to us, while the second are antipodal and reversed. What thesesages did not realize is that only one tenth of the earth's sphere is land, while the rest is almost entirely swallowed upby the abyss of the waters.

10. You should realize that, apart from the region of the earth which we inhabit, there is no other habitable land,since it is all inundated by the waters of the abyss. You should also bear in mind that (omitting ether) the fourelements out of which the world is fashioned balance one another equally, and that each of the elements has its ownsphere, the size of which is proportionate to its density, as Aristotle also thinks. Tor', he says, 'there are fiveelements located in five spherical regions, and the greater spheres always encompass the lesser: water encompassesearth; air encompasses water; fire, air; and ether, fire. This constitutes the world.'

11. Ether is more translucent than fire, which is also called 'combustible matter', and fire is many times greater involume than air, and air than water, and water than earth which, as it is the most compressed, is the least in volumeof all the four elements under the heavens. Since the sphere of water is many times greater in size than that of earth,if the two spheres - that of water and that of earth - had the same centre and the water was poured over the entiresurface of the earth, the water would not have left any part of the earth's surface available for use by terrestrialanimals, since it would have covered all the soil and the earth's surface would have been everywhere at aconsiderable depth beneath it. But since the waters do not entirely swallow up earth's surface - for the dry land weinhabit is not covered by them - the sphere of the waters must of necessity be eccentric to the earth's sphere. Thuswe must try to discover by how much it is

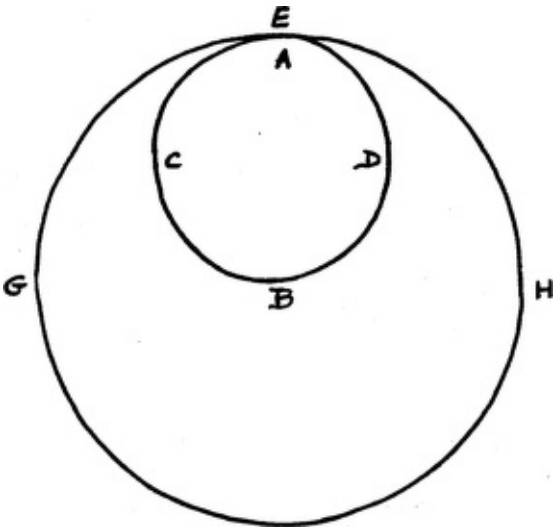
eccentric and where its centre lies, whether above or beneath us. Yet it cannot be above us, since we see a part ofthe water's surface below us. Thus from our point of view the centre of the sphere of water is beneath the earth'scentre. We have still to discover how far this centre is from the centre of the earth.

12. You can see how far from our viewpoint the centre of water's sphere lies beneath the centre of earth's sphere ifyou take into consideration that the surface of the water visible to us and beneath us - just as the ground we walkupon is beneath us - coincides almost exactly with the surface of the earth which we inhabit. But the habitable regionof the earth is about one tenth of its circumference, for the earth has five Stones, and we inhabit half of one of thosefive. Hence if you want to fit a sphere that encompasses the earth on to one that encompasses this tenth part of its

surface you will find that the diameter of the exterior sphere is nearly twice as great as the diameter of the interiorsphere, while its volume is eight times greater; and its centre will be situated at what is from our viewpoint thebottom extremity of the sphere of the earth. This is clear from the following diagram.

13. Let us represent the earth's sphere with a circle on the inside of which are the letters A, B, C, D; and aroundthis let us draw another circle representing water's sphere, which touches the first circle at its highest point, and onthe outside of this second circle let us write the letters E, F, G. H. It will be found that, from our point of view, thecentre of the outer circle will lie on the circumference of the inner circle at its bottom extremity. And since thediameter of the outer circle is twice that of the inner circle, and since it can be demonstrated geometrically that thesphere whose diameter is twice that of another sphere is eight times the size of the latter, it follows that one eighth ofthe sphere of the element of water is contained by and merged with earth's sphere. It is for this reason that manysprings of water gush forth from the earth and abundant, ever-flowing rivers issue from it, and the gulfs of manyseas pour into it, and many lakes spread over it. There is scarcely any place on the earth where, if you dig, you willnot find water flowing beneath.

14. As the above diagram and logic itself teach us, no region of the earth other than our own is inhabited. For justas the earth would be totally uninhabitable if both earth and water had the same centre, so, even more truly, if thewater has its centre at what is from our point of



view the lowest extremity of the earth, all the other parts of the earth, apart from the region where we live which

fits into the upper section of the water's sphere, must be uninhabitable since they are flooded by water. And since ithas already been demonstrated that embodied deiform souls dwell only in the inhabited region of the earth, and thatthere is but one such region on the earth - the one in which we live - it follows that land animals not endowed withintelligence also dwell solely in this region.

15. Sight is formed from the manifold impressions of colors and shapes; smell from odors; taste from flavors;hearing from sounds;

and touch from things that are rough or smooth on contact. The impressions that the senses receive come frombodies but, although corporeal, they are not bodies themselves. For they do not arise directly from bodies, but fromthe forms that are associated with

bodies. Yet they are not themselves these forms, since they are but impressions

left by the forms; and so, likeimages, they are inseparably separated from these forms. This is particularly evident in the case of sight, especiallywhen objects are seen in mirrors.

16. These sense impressions are in turn appropriated from the senses by the soul's imaginative faculty; and thisfaculty totally separates not the senses themselves but what we have called the images that exist within them fromthe bodies and their forms. It stores them up like treasures and brings them forward ulteriorly - now one and nowanother, each in its own time - for its own use even when there is no corresponding body present. In this way it setsbefore itself all manner of things seen, heard, tasted, smelled and touched.

17. In creatures endowed with intelligence this imaginative faculty of the soul is an intermediary between theintellect and the senses. For the intellect beholds and dwells upon the images received in itself from the senses -images separated from bodies and already bodiless - and it formulates various kinds of thought by means ofdistinctions, analysis and inference. This happens in various ways - impassionately or dispassionately or in a statebetween the two, both with and without error. From these thoughts are bom most virtues and vices, as well asopinions, whether right or wrong. Yet not every thought that comes into the intellect has its origin in the images ofthings perceived or is connected with them. There are some thoughts that do not come within the scope of thesenses, but are given to the thinking faculty by the intellect itself. As regards our thoughts, then, not every truth orerror, virtue or vice has its origin in the imagination.

18. What is remarkable and deserving our attention is how beauty or ugliness, wealth or poverty, glory or illrepute - and, in short, either the noetic light that bestows eternal life or the noetic darkness of chastisement - enterthe soul, becoming firmly established within it, from merely transitory and sensible things.

19. When the intellect enthrones itself on the soul's imaginative faculty and thereby becomes associated with thesenses, it engenders a composite form of knowledge. For suppose you look at the setting sun and then see the moonfollow it, illuminated in the small part turned towards the sun, and in the subsequent days you note that the moongradually recedes and is illuminated more brightly until the opposite process sets in; and suppose you then see the

moon draw closer from the other side and its hght wane more and more until it disappears

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altogether at the point at which it first received illumination; suppose you take intellectual note of all this, havingin your imagination the images you have previously received and with the moon itself ever present before your eyes,you will in this way understand from sense-perception, imagination and intellection that the moon gets its light fromthe sun, and that its orbit is much lower than the sun's and closer to the earth.

20. As in this way we achieve knowledge of things pertaining to the moon, so in a similar way we can achieveknowledge of things pertaining to the sun - the solar eclipses and their nodes - as well as of the parallaxes, intervalsand varied configurations involving the planets, and in short of all phenomena concerning the heavens. The sameholds true with regard to the laws of nature, and every method and art, and in brief with regard to all knowledgeacquired from the perception of particulars. Such knowledge we gather from the senses and the imagination bymeans of the intellect. Yet no such knowledge can ever be called spiritual, for it is natural, things of the Spirit beingbeyond its scope (cf. 1 Cor. 2:14).

21. Where can we learn anything certain and true about God, about the world as a whole, and about ourselves? Isit not from the teaching of the Holy Spirit? For this teaching has taught us that God is the only Being that truly is -the only eternal and immutable Being - who neither receives being from non-being nor returns to non-being; who isTri-hypostatic and Almighty, and who through His Logos brought forth all things from non-being in six days or,rather, as Moses states. He created them instantaneously. For we have heard him say, 'First of all God createdheaven and earth' (Gen. 1:1). And He did not create them totally, empty or without any intermediary bodies at all.For the earth was mixed with water, and each was pregnant with air and with the various species of animals andplants, while the heavens were pregnant with various lights and fires; and so

with the heavens and the earth allthings received their existence. Thus first of all God created the heavens and the earth as a kind of all-embracingmaterial substance with the potentiality of giving birth to all things. In this way He rightly rebuts those who wronglythink that matter preexisted on its own as an autonomous entity.

22. After this initial creation. He who brings forth all things from non-being proceeds as it were to embellish andadorn the world. In six days He allotted its own proper and appropriate rank to each of

His creatures that together constitute His world. He differentiates each by command alone, as though bringingforth from hidden treasuries the things stored within, giving them form, and disposing and composing themharmoniously, with perfection and aptness, one to the other, each to all and all to each. Establishing the. immovableearth as the centre He encircled it in the highest vault with the ever-moving heavens and in His great wisdom boundthe two together by means of the intermediary regions. Thus the same world is both at rest and moving. For whilethe heavenly bodies encircle the earth in rapid and perpetual motion, the immovable body of the earth necessarilyoccupies the central position, its state of rest serving as a counterbalance to the heavens' mobility. In this way thepancosmic sphere does not change its position as it would if it were cylindrical.

23. Thus by assigning such positions to the two bodies that mark the boundaries of the universe - the earth and theheavens - the Master-craftsman both made fast and set in motion what one might call this entire and orderly world;and He farther allotted what was fitting to each thing lying between these two limits. Some He placed on high,enjoining them to move in the upper regions and to revolve for all time round the uttermost boundary of the universein a wise and ordered manner. Those are the light and active bodies capable of making bodies that lie beneath themfit and serviceable. They are most wisely set above the world's middle region so that they can sufficiently dispel theexcessive coldness

there and restrain their own excessive heat to its proper level. In some manner they also restrictthe excessive mobility of the world's outermost, bounds, for they have their own opposing movement and they holdthat outermost region in place through their counter-rotation. At the same time they provide us with beneficial yearlychanges of season, whereby we can measure temporal extension; and to those with understanding they supplyknowledge of the God who has created, ordered and adorned the world. Hence He commanded those bodies in theupper region to dance round it in swift rotation for two reasons: to fill the entire universe with beauty and to furnisha variety of more specific benefits. He set lower down in the middle region other bodies of a heavy and passivenature that come into being and undergo change, that decompose and are recompounded, and that suffer alterationfor a useful purpose. He established these bodies and their relationships to one another in an orderly manner

so that all things together could rightly be called 'cosmos', that is to say, that which is well-ordered.

24. In this manner the first of beings was brought forth into creation and after that another was brought forth, andafter that still another, and so on, until last of all man was brought forth. So great was the honor and providentialcare which God bestowed upon man that He brought the entire sensible world into being before him and for hissake. The kingdom of heaven was prepared for him from the foundation of the world (cf Matt. 25:34); God firsttook counsel concerning him, and then he was fashioned by God's hand and according to the image of God (cf. Gen.1:26-27). God did not form the whole of man from matter and from the elements of this sensible world, as He didthe other animals. He formed only man's body from these materials; but man's soul He took from thingssupracelestial or, rather, it came from God Himself when mysteriously He breathed life into man (cf. Gen. 2:7). Thehuman soul is something great and wondrous, superior to the entire world; it overlooks the universe and has all

things in its care; it is capable of knowing and receiving God, and more than

anything else has the capacity ofmanifesting the sublime magnificence of the Master-Craftsman. Not only capable of receiving God and His gracethrough ascetic struggle, it is also able to be united in Him in a single hypostasis.

25. Here and in such things as these lie the true wisdom and the saving knowledge that procure for us theblessedness of heaven. What Euclid, Marinos or Ptolemy has been able to understand these truths? WhatEmpedocleans, Socratics, Aristotelians and Platonists with their logical methods and mathematical demonstrations?Or, rather, what form of sense-perception has grasped such things, what intellect apprehended them? If the wisdomof the Spirit seemed something lowly to these philosophers of nature and their followers, this fact alonedemonstrates its incomparable superiority. In much the same way as animals not endowed with intelligence arerelated to the wisdom of these men - or, if you wish, as children would consider the pastries they hold in their handssuperior to the imperial crown and to all the knowledge of these philosophers - so are these philosophers in relationto the true and sublime wisdom and teaching of the Spirit.

26. To know God truly - in so far as this is possible - is incomparably superior to the philosophy of the Greeks,and simply to know what place man has in relation to God surpasses all their wisdom. For man

alone among all terrestrial and celestial beings is created in the image of his Maker, so that he might look to Godand love Him and be an initiate and worshipper of God alone, and so that he might preserve his own beauty by hisfaith in God and his devotion and affection towards Him, and might know that whatever is found on earth and in theheavens is inferior to himself and is completely void of intelligence. This the Greek sages could never conceive of,and they dishonored our nature and were irreverent towards God. 'They worshipped and served the creature ratherthan the Creator' (Rom. 1:25), attributing to the sense-perceptible yet insensate stars an intelligence in each caseproportionate in power and dignity to its physical size. They wretchedly

worshipped these things, called themgreater and lesser gods, and committed the lordship of all things to them. Did they not thus shame their own souls,dishonoring and impoverishing them, and filling them with a truly noetic and chastising darkness by theirpreoccupation with a philosophy based on sense-objects?

27. To know that we have been created in God's image prevents us from deifying even the noetic world. 'Image'here refers not to the body but to the nature of the intellect. Nothing in nature is superior to the intellect, for if therewere then it would constitute the divine image. Since, therefore, the intellect is what is best in us and this, eventhough it is in the divine image, is none the less created by God, why, then, is it difficult to understand or, rather,how is it not self-evident that the Creator of that which is noetic in us is also the Creator of everything noetic? Thusevery noetic being, since it is likewise created in the image of God, is our fellow-servant, even if certain noeticbeings are more honorable than us in that they possess no body and so more closely resemble the utterly bodilessand uncreated Nature. Or, rather, those noetic beings who have kept their rank and who maintain the purpose forwhich they were created deserve our homage and are far superior to us, even though they are fellow-servants. On the

other hand, the noetic beings who did not keep their rank but rebelled and rejected the purpose for which they werecreated are totally estranged from those close to God, and they have fallen from honor. And if they attempt to dragus after them and to make us fall, they are not only worthless and disgraced but are also God's enemies anddestructive and inimical to the human race.

28. Yet natural scientists, astronomers and those who boast of possessing universal knowledge are unable tounderstand anything of

what has just been said on the basis of their philosophy. Moreover, they have regarded the ruler of the noeticdarkness and all the rebellious powers under him not only as superior to themselves but even as gods, and they havehonored them with temples, made sacrifices to them and submitted themselves to their niinous

oracles. In this waythey were mocked exceedingly by the demons, through unholy sacred objects, through defiling purifications whichonly increased their accursed conceit, and through prophets and prophetesses who estranged them totally from theessential truth.

29. For a man to know God, and to know himself and his proper rank - a knowledge now possessed even byChristians who are thought to be quite unlearned - is a knowledge superior to natural science and astronomy and toall philosophy concerning such matters. Moreover, for our intellect to know its own infirmity, and to seek healingfor it, is incomparably greater than to know and search out the magnitude of the stars, the principles of nature, thegeneration of terrestrial things and the circuits of celestial bodies, their solstices and risings, stations andretrogressions, separations and conjunctions and, in short, all the multiform relationships which arise from the manydifferent motions in the heavens. For the intellect that recognizes its own infirmity has discovered where to enter inorder to find salvation and how to approach the light of knowledge and receive the true wisdom that does not passaway with this present world.

30. Every spiritual and noetic nature, whether angelic or human, possesses life as its essence, whereby it continuesimmortal in its existence and does not admit dissolution. But the spiritual and noetic nature within us has life notonly as its essence but also as its activity, since it quickens the body united to it. For this reason it is also called thebody's life. And when it is called the life of the body, it is called life with reference to something else and is anactivity of our nature; for when relative to something else it can never be called an essence in itself. The noeticnature of angels, however, does not possess life as an activity of this sort, because it did not receive an earthy bodyfrom God and was not united to it in such a way as to have a quickening power in regard to it. Yet their nature canadmit opposites, that is, good and evil. This is confirmed by the fact that the wicked angels fell away because oftheir pride. Thus the angels are somehow composite, being formed of their essence and one of these contraryqualities of virtue or vice.

Hence it is evident that even angels do not have goodness as theiressence.

31. The soul of each animal not imbued with intelligence is the life of the body that it animates; it does notpossess life as essence, but as activity, since here life is relative and not something in itself. Indeed, the soul ofanimals consists of nothing except that which is actuated by the body. Thus when the body dissolves, the soulinevitably dissolves as well. Their soul is no less mortal than their body, since everything that it is relates and refersto what is mortal. So when the body dies the soul also dies.

32. The soul of each man is also the life of the body that it animates, and possesses a quickening activity inrelation to something else, namely, to the body that it quickens. Yet the soul has life not only as an activity but alsoas its essence, since it is self-existent; for it possesses a spiritual and noetic life that is evidently different from thebody's and from what is actuated by the body. Hence when the body dissolves the human soul does not perish withit; and not only does it not perish but it continues to exist immortally, since it is not manifest only in relation tosomething else, but possesses its own life as its essence.

33. The spiritual and noetic soul possesses life as essence, yet it can admit contraries, that is to say, good and evil.Thus it is evident that it does not have goodness as essence, nor evil either; both are as it were qualities and wheneither is present it is because the soul has chosen it. They are present, not with respect to place, but whenever thenoetic soul, having received free will from its Creator, inclines to one or the other and wills to live in accordancewith it. Hence the spiritual and noetic soul is somehow composite, but not on account of the activity mentionedabove; for this activity is related to something else, namely, the body, and so does not by nature produce what iscomposite. Rather the soul is composite on account of its own essence and the presence in it of one of the twocontrary qualities - good and evil - of which we have just spoken.

34. The supreme Intellect, the uttermost Good, the Nature which transcends life and divinity, being entirelyincapable of admitting opposites in any way, clearly possesses goodness not as a quality but as essence. Henceeverything that we can conceive of as good is to be found in It or, rather, the supreme Intellect both is that good andsurpasses goodness. And everything that we can conceive of as being in the Intellect is good or, rather, is bothgoodness and a Goodness that

transcends goodness. Life, too, is to be found in It or, rather, the Intellect is life; for life is good and the life that is

in the Intellect is goodness. And Wisdom is in It, or, rather, the Intellect is Wisdom; for Wisdom is good and theWisdom that is in the Intellect is goodness. It is the same with eternity, blessedness and everything that we canconceive of as good. There is no distinction between life and wisdom and goodness and so on, for this Goodnessembraces all these things comprehensively, umtively and in utter simplicity, and we conceive of It and call ItGoodness by virtue of Its embracing every form of goodness. Whatever goodness we can conceive of and ascribe toIt is one and true. Yet this Goodness is not only that which is truly conceived of by those who perceive with anintellect imbued with divine Wisdom and who speak of God with a tongue moved by the Spirit; it is also ineffableand incomprehensible and transcends these things, and is not inferior to the unitive and supernatural simplicity; forabsolute and transcendent Goodness is one. It is by virtue of this alone - namely, that He is absolute andtranscendent Goodness, possessing goodness as His essence - that the Creator and Lord of Creation is bothintellectually perceived and described; and this solely on the basis of His energies which are directed towardscreation. Hence in no way whatever does God admit what is contrary to goodness, since there is nothing contrarywhere essence is concerned.

35. This absolute and transcendent Goodness is also the source of goodness; and that which proceeds from It islikewise good and is supremely good and cannot be lacking in perfect goodness. The transcendently and absolutelyperfect Goodness is Intellect; thus what else could that which proceeds from It as from a source be exceptIntelligence-content or Logos? But the divine Logos is not to be understood in the same way as the human thought-form that we express orally, for that proceeds not from the intellect but from a body activated by the intellect; nor isit to be understood in the same way as our human inner intelligence-principle, for this, too, is disposed within us insuch a way as to give birth to different forms of sound. Neither is the divine Logos equivalent to the reasoningpower in our mind, even though this is soundless and operates entirely according to impulses that are bodiless. Forthe reasoning logos, as a faculty

dependent on us, requires for its functioning successive moments of time, since itemerges gradually, proceeding from an incomplete starting-point to its complete conclusion. Rather, the divineLogos is similar to the logos

implanted by nature in our intellect, according to which we are made by the Creator in His own image and whichconstitutes the spiritual knowledge coexistent with the intellect. On the plane of the sublime Intellect of the absoluteand transcendently perfect Goodness, wherein there is nothing imperfect, the divine Logos-Gnosis isindistinguishably whatever that Goodness is, except for the fact that it is derived from It. Thus the supreme Logos isalso the Son, and is so described by us, in order that we may recognize Him to be perfect in a perfect and individualhypostasis, since He comes from the Father and is in no way inferior to the Father's essence, but is indistinguishablyidentical with Him, although not according to hypostasis; for His distinction as hypostasis is manifest in the fact thatthe Logos is begotten in a divinely fitting manner from the Father.

36. The Goodness, then, that issues by way of generation from the Source of noetic goodness is Logos. But nointelhgent person could conceive of a Logos or InteUigence-content that is hfeless and without spirit. Hence theLogos, God from God, possesses the Holy Spirit that issues together with Himself from the Father. Yet the HolySpirit is spirit not in the sense whereby the breath conjoined to the word issuing from our lips is spirit, for this is abody and is conjoined to our speech through bodily organs; nor is it spirit in the sense whereby that whichaccompanies, albeit bodilessly, our innate reasoning process is spirit, for that, too, entails a certain impulse of theintellect that accompanies our thought-process through successive intervals of time, and progresses fromincompletion to completion. The Spirit of the supreme Logos is a kind of meffable yet intense longing or erosexperienced by the Begetter for the Logos bom ineffably from Him, a longing experienced also by the belovedLogos and Son of the Father for His Begetter; but the Logos possesses this love by virtue of the fact that it comesfrom the Father in the very act through which He comes from the Father,

and it resides co-naturally in Him. It isfrom the Logos's discourse with us through His incarnation that we have learned what is the name of the Spirit'sdistinct mode of coming to be from the Father and that the Spirit belongs not only to the Father but also to theLogos. For He says 'the Spirit of Truth, who proceeds from the Father' (John 15:26), so that we may know that fromthe Father comes not solely the Logos - who is begotten from the Father - but also the Spirit who proceeds from theFather. Yet the Spirit belongs also to the Son, who receives Him from the Father as the Spirit of

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Truth, Wisdom and Logos. For Truth and Wisdom constitute a Logos that befits His Begetter, a Logos thatrejoices with the Father as the Father rejoices in Him. This accords with the words that He spoke through Solomon:'I was She who rejoiced together with Him' (Prov, 8:30). Solomon did not say simply 'rejoiced' but 'rejoiced togetherwith'. This pre-etemal rejoicing of the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit who, as I said, is common to both, whichexplains why He is sent from both to those who are worthy. Yet the Spirit has His existence from the Father alone,and hence He proceeds as regards His existence only from the Father.

37. Our intellect, because created in God's image, possesses likewise the image of this sublime Eros or intenselonging - an image expressed in the love experienced by the intellect for the spiritual knowledge that originates fromit and continually abides in it. This love is of the intellect and in the intellect and issues forth from it together with itsinnermost intelligence or logos. This is shown clearly by the fact that even those who are unable to perceive whatlies deeply within themselves possess an insatiable desire for spiritual knowledge. Yet in the Archetype, in thisabsolutely and transcendently perfect Goodness, wherein there is nothing imperfect, the divine Eros isindistinguishably whatever that Goodness is, except for the fact that it is derived from It. Hence this intense longingis - and is called - the Holy Spirit and the other Comforter (cf John 14:16), since He accompanies the Logos. Thuswe know Him to be perfect in a perfect and individual hypostasis, in no way inferior to the Father's essence,

butindistinguishably identical with the Son and the Father, although not according to hypostasis; for His distinction ashypostasis is manifest in the fact that He proceeds from God in a divinely fitting manner. Thus we worship one trueand perfect God in three true and perfect hypostases - not, certainly, a threefold God but one who is simple. For

Goodness is not something threefold, nor a triad of goodnesses. Rather, the most subhme Goodness is a holy, awe-inspiring and venerable Trinity flowing forth out of Itself into Itself without change and divinely established in Itselfbefore the ages. The Trinity is without limits and is limited only by Itself; It limits all things, transcends all andpermits no beings to be outside Itself.

38. The noetic and intelligent nature of angels also possesses intellect, and the thought-form (logos) that proceedsfrom the intellect, and the intense longing (eros) of the intellect for its thought-form.

This longing is likewise from the intellect and coexists eternally with the thought-form and the intellect, and canbe called spirit since by nature it accompanies the thought-form. But this spirit in the case of angels is not life-generating, for it has not received from God an earthy body conjoined with it, and so it has not received the power togenerate and sustain life. On the other hand the noetic and intelligent nature of the human soul has received a life-generating spirit from God since the soul is created together with an earthy body, and so by means of the spirit itsustains and quickens the body conjoined to it. This makes it clear to those who possess understanding that the spiritof man 'that quickens the body is noetic longing (eros), a longing that issues from the intellect and its thought-form,that exists in the thought-form and the intellect, and that possesses in itself both the thought-form and the intellect.Through the spirit the soul possesses such a natural union of love with its particular body that it never wants toabandon it, and it would never leave it at all if it was not forced to do so by some grave illness or affliction thatassails it from without.

39. Since the noetic and intelligent nature of the human soul alone possesses

intellect, thought-form and life-generating spirit, it alone -more so than the bodiless angels - is created by God in His image. This image the soulpossesses inalienably, even if it does not recognize its own dignity, or think and live in a manner worthy of theCreator's image within it. After our forefather's transgression in paradise through the tree, we suffered the death ofour soul - which is the separation of the soul from God - prior to our bodily death; yet although we cast away ourdivine likeness, we did not lose our divine image. Thus when the soul renounces its attachment to inferior things andcleaves through love to God and submits itself to Him through acts and modes of virtue, it is illuminated and madebeautiful by God and is raised to a higher level, obeying His counsels and exhortations; and by these means itregains the truly eternal life. Through this life it makes the body conjoined to it immortal, so that in due time thebody attains the promised resurrection and participates in eternal glory. But if the soul does not repudiate itsattachment and submission to inferior things whereby it shamefully dishonors God's image, it alienates itself fromGod and is estranged from the true and truly blessed life of God; for as it has first abandoned God, it is justlyabandoned by Him.

40. The triadic nature sequent to the supreme Trinity - that is to say, the human soul - has more than other naturesbeen made by the

Trinity noetic, intelligent and spiritual. In this way it is created more than other natures in the image of theTrinity. Thus it ought to maintain its proper rank, be sequent to God alone, yoked to Him alone, and subject andobedient to Him alone. It ought to look only to Him and adorn itself with the constant mindfulness andcontemplation of Him, and with most fervent and ardent love for Him. For by these means it is wondrously drawnback to itself or, rather, it draws to itself the mystical and ineffable glory of God's nature. Then the soul trulypossesses the image and the likeness of God and is thereby made gracious, wise and divine. When this glory ismanifestly present or when it approaches unnoticed, the soul now increasingly learns to love God more than itselfand to love its neighbor as itself. From this it learns to know and preserve its own

dignity and rank, and truly to loveitself. On the other hand, 'He who loves injustice hates his own soul' (Ps. 11:5. LXX), and through tearing apart andcrippling the image of God in himself he suffers in a way similar to the mentally deranged who pitifully rend theirown flesh without being aware of it. Such a person unconsciously outrages and most wretchedly mutilates his innatebeauty, mindlessly shattering the soul's triadic, supra-mundane and love-filled world. What can be more wrong-headed and pernicious than to refuse to remember, to refuse to gaze continually upon and love Him who created andadorned the soul with His own image, thus conferring the capacity for spiritual knowledge and love, as well aslavishing indescribable gifts and eternal life upon all who use this capacity aright.

41. The noetic serpent, the author of evil, is one of the beings inferior to our soul, as he is also far inferior to othercreatures. He has now become an angel and herald of his own wickedness as a result of his wicked counsel to humanbeings. He is so much more base than and inferior to all other beings that he desired in his arrogance to become likethe Creator in authority; and he was justly abandoned by God to the same degree that he himself had first abandonedGod. So total was his defection from God that he became His opponent and adversary and manifest enemy. Thus ifGod is living Goodness and the Quickener of living things, clearly the devil is deadly and death-dealing evil. Godpossesses goodness as His essence and by nature does not admit of its opposite, that is, evil, so that whoeverpartakes of evil of any sort may not so much as draw near Him. How much more will He not drive as far as possiblefrom Himself the creator and originator of evil and the

cause of it in others? The evil one possesses not evil but life as his essence, and hence he lives immortally. Yethis essence was capable of admitting evil since he was honored with free will. Had he voluntarily accepted asubordinate status and cleaved to the everflowing Well-spring of goodness he would have partaken of true life. Butsince he deliberately gave himself over to evil, he was deprived of true life and was justly expelled from it, having

himself abandoned it in the first place. Thus he became a dead spirit, not in essence - since death lacks substantialreality - but through his rejection of true life. Yet unsated in his pursuit of evil and adding more and more to hiswretchedness, he made himself into a death-generating spirit, eagerly drawing man into communion with his ownstate of death.

42. The mediator and cause of death, twisted in character and inordinate m craftiness, once insinuated himself intoa twisting serpent in God's paradise. He did not himself become a serpent (nor could he, except in an illusory form;and this he preferred not to adopt at that time, for fear of being detected); but, not daring an open confrontation, hechose a deceitful approach, trusting that by this means he would escape detection. Thus, having the. visible aspect ofa friend he could secretly insinuate the most hateful things, and by the extraordinary fact of his talking- for thevisible serpent was not endowed with intelligence, nor did it previously appear capable of speaking - he couldastonish Eve and draw her whole attention entirely to himself and by his devices make her easy to deal with. In thisway he was able immediately to induce her to subject herself to what is inferior and so to enslave herself to thingsover which she was appointed to reign worthily, as she alone among visible beings had been honored by God withintelligence and created in the image of the Creator. God permitted this so that man, seeing the counsel coming froma creature inferior to himself - and, indeed, how greatly is the serpent his inferior - might realize how completelyworthless this counsel was and might rightly reject with indignation the idea of submitting to what was clearlyinferior to him. In this way he would preserve his own dignity and at the same time, by obeying the divinecommandment, would keep faith with the Creator. Thus he would have won an easy victory over the spirit that hadfallen away from true life, and would have justly received blessed immortality and would abide eternally in lifedivine.

43. No being is superior to man so as to be in a position to advise

him and propose opinions and thus discern and provide what is fitting for him.

But this is the case only if manmaintains his rank, knows himself and knows, too. Him who alone is superior to him, observing those things whichhe learns from God and resolutely accepting God's counsel alone as regards anything proposed to him by others. Foralthough angels are superior to us in dignity, it is their task obediently to execute God's designs respecting us; forthey are ministers sent to serve 'those who are to be the heirs of salvation' (Heb. 1: 14) - not all angels, of course, butonly the beneficent angels who have kept their own rank. The angels have received intellect, intelligence and spiritfrom God, three co-natural qualities; and like us they should obey the creative Intellect, Intelligence and Spirit.Although the angels are superior to us in many ways, yet in some respects - as we have said and as we will repeat -they fall short of us with regard to being in the image of the Creator; for we, rather than they, have been created inGod's image.

44. The angels are ordained to serve the Creator effectively and their appointed role is to be ruled by God. Butthey are not appointed to rule over beings inferior to themselves unless they are sent to do so by the Sovereign Rulerof all. Yet Satan presumptuously yearned to rule contrary to the will of the Creator, and when together with his

fellow apostate angels he forsook his proper rank he was rightly abandoned by the true Source of life andillumination and clothed himself in death and eternal darkness. But because man was appointed not merely to beruled by God but also to rule over all creatures upon the earth, the arch-fiend looked upon him with malicious eyesand made use of every ploy to deprive him of his dominion. Being unable to use constraint, since he is preventedfrom doing this by the Sovereign Ruler who created all intelligent nature free and self-determining, he deceitfullysuggested such counsel as would abolish man's dominion. He beguiled him or, rather, persuaded him to disregard,disdain and reject, and indeed to oppose and to act contrary to the commandment and counsel given him by God. Inthis way he induced man to share in his apostasy, and so to share also in his state of eternal darkness and death.

45. St Paul has taught us that the soul endowed with intelligence can be as if dead even though it possesses life asits being; for he writes, 'The self-indulgent widow is dead while still alive' (1 Tim. 5:6). He could not have saidworse than this about the present subject of our

discourse, namely, the soul endowed with intelligence. For if the soul deprived of the spiritual Bridegroom doesnot humble itself and mourn, and does not adopt the strait and grievous life of repentance, but is, on the contrary,profligate, sunk in sensual pleasure and self-indulgence, it is dead even while it lives and even though it is immortalin essence. It has the capacity for what is worse, death, and likewise for what is better, life. The apostle says that if awidow deprived of her earthly bridegroom lives self-indulgently, although alive in her body she is utterly dead in hersoul. He also says elsewhere, 'Even when we were dead because of our sins God quickened us together with Christ'(Eph. 2:5). As St John says, 'There is sin that leads to death and there is sin that does not lead to death' (1 John 5:16-17). And the Lord Himself, in commanding a man to 'let the dead bury their own dead' (Matt. 8:22), made it clearthat those involved in the funeral, although alive in body, were utterly dead in soul.

46. The ancestors of our race willfully desisted from mindfulness and contemplation of God. They disregardedHis commandment, made themselves of one mind with the dead spirit of Satan and, contrary to the Creator's will,ate of the forbidden tree. Stripped of their resplendent and life-giving garments of supernal radiance, they became,alas, dead in spirit like Satan. But since Satan is not merely a dead spirit, but also brings death upon those who drawnear him, and since those who shared in his deadness possessed a body through which the deadly counsel tookeffect, they transmitted those dead and death-dealing spirits of death to their own bodies. The human body wouldhave immediately decomposed and returned to the earth whence it was taken (cf Gen. 3:19), had it not beenpreserved by divine providence and power, patiently awaiting the decision of Him who brings about all thingsthrough His word alone. Without this decision nothmg at all is accomplished, and it is always just. As the Psalmistsays, 'The Lord is just and He loves justice' (Ps. 11:7. LXX).

47. Scripture tells us, 'God did not create death' (Wisd. 1:13). Rather, He impeded its inception in so far as thiswas fitting, and in so far as it was consistent with His justice to obstruct those to whom He Himself had given freewill when He created them. For from the beginning God gave them a counsel that would lead to immortality, and so

that they would be safeguarded as far as possible He made His life-generating counsel a commandment. He clearlyforetold and forewarned that death would be the consequence of rejecting this

vivifying commandment, so that either through love or knowledge or fear they would protect themselves from theexperience of death. For God loves, knows and has the power to effect what is profitable for every created being. IfGod only knew what is profitable but did not love it. He might have left unfinished what He knew to be good.Again, if He loved what is profitable but did not know it or was unable to accomplish it, perhaps against His willwhat He loved and knew would have remained unaccomplished. But since to the highest possible degree He loves,knows and is able to effect what is profitable for us, everything that comes to us from Him, even though it bewithout our wanting it, will certainly prove to be to our profit. On the other hand, it is greatly to be feared thatwhatever we engage in on our own initiative, as creatures endowed with free will, will prove to be unprofitable forus. When, however. God in His providence has plainly forbidden something, whether speaking directly, as He doesin paradise and in the Gospel, or else speaking through the prophets, as He does to the Israelites, or through theapostles and their successors, as He does in the law of grace, it is clearly most unprofitable and destructive for us todesire and pursue it. And if someone proffers it to us and induces us to seek it, either by persuasive words or byenchanting us with apparent friendship, he is manifestly an enemy and hostile to our life.

48. Hence - whether out of love for Him who wants us to live (for why would God have created us as livingcreatures if He did not especially want us to live?), or because we recognize that He knows what is for our profitbetter than we do (and how could He who grants us knowledge and is the Lord of knowledge not know thisincomparably better than we do?), or out of fear for His almighty power - we ought not to have been misled, luredand persuaded at that time into rejecting God's commandment and counsel; and the same now holds good withregard to those saving commandments and counsels which we later

received, just as now those who do not choosecourageously to resist sin, and who set the divine commandments at nought, end up - if they do not renew their soulsthrough repentance - by following a path that leads to inner and eternal death, so our two primal ancestors, by notresisting those who persuaded them to disobey, violated the commandment. Because of this the sentence previouslyproclaimed to them by Him who judges justly immediately took effect, so that as soon as they ate of the tree theydied. At this they understood in

practice the meaning of the commandment which they had forgotten -the commandment of truth, love, wisdomand power -and they hid themselves in shame (cf Gen. 3:7-8), perceiving themselves to be stripped of the glory that

bestows on immortal spirits a more excellent life and without which the life of spiritual beings is believed to be andis indeed far worse than many deaths.

49. That it was not yet to our ancestors' benefit to eat of the tree is made clear by St Gregory of Nazianzos whenhe writes: 'The tree, in my vision of things, is divine contemplation, which only those established in a high degree ofperfection can safely approach, while it is not good for those who are still immature and greedy in their desires, justas solid food is not good for those who are yet tender and have need of milk.' But even if you do not want to referthat tree and its fruit anagogically to divine contemplation, it is not difficult, I think, to see that eating its fruit was ofno benefit to our ancestors, since they were still immature. In my opinion they saw that the tree was the mostattractive in paradise to look at and to eat from. But the food most pleasant to the senses is not truly and in everyway good, nor is it always good, nor good for everyone. Rather it is good for those who can make use of it withoutbeing mastered by it, and then only when it is necessary and to the extent that it is necessary, and for the glory ofHim who made it; but it is not good for those who are unable to make use of it in such a manner. It is on account ofthis, I think, that the tree was called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (cf. Gen. 2:17). For only those fullyestablished in the practice of divine contemplation and virtue can have concourse with things

strongly attractive tothe senses without withdrawing their intellect from the contemplation of God and from hymns and prayers to Him.Only such people can make these things the material and starting-point for raising themselves to God, and throughthis noetic movement towards God can totally master sensual pleasure. And even though displeasure may be novel,and may be greater and more powerful because of its novelty, they will not allow their soul's intelligence to beovercome by that which is evil, even though at the time it is regarded as good by those totally captured and masteredby it.

50. Consequently our ancestors - who since they dwelt in the

sacred land of paradise should never have forgotten God - ought first to have acquired more practice and, so tospeak, schooling in simple, genuine goodness and to have gained greater stability in the life of contemplation. Beingstill in an imperfect and intermediate state - that is to say, easily influenced, whether for good or evil, by whateverthey made use of - they should not have ventured on the experience of things pleasant to the senses. They oughtespecially to have been on their guard against things that by nature greatly allure and dominate the senses and thatseduce the entire intellect and give access to evil passions, thus rendering plausible the originator and creator ofthese passions. Now, after the devil, the cause of the passions is the impassioned eating of the most delectable kindsof foods. For if, as Scripture testifies, simply the sight of the tree was enough to make the serpent an acceptable andtrustworthy counselor, how much more would the taste of the fruit have the same effect? And if this is true for thetaste, how much more is it so for eating to repletion? Thus is it not clear that it was not yet profitable for ourancestors to eat of that tree through the senses? And because they did eat of it at the wrong time, was it notnecessary for them to be cast out of paradise, to prevent them from making that divine land a council-chamber and

workshop of evil? And should they not have undergone bodily death immediately after their transgression? But theLord was long-suffering and

patient with them.

51. The soul's death sentence, brought into effect by man's transgression, was in accord with the Creator's justice;for when our forefathers forsook God and chose to do their own will. He abandoned them, not subjecting them toconstraint. And, for the reasons we have stated above. God in His compassion had already forewarned them of thissentence (cf Gen. 2:17). But in the abyss of His wisdom and the superabundance of His compassion he forbore anddelayed in executing the sentence of death upon the body; and when He did pronounce it He relegated its executionto the future. He did not say to Adam, 'Return whence you were taken', but 'You are earth, and to earth you willreturn' (Gen. 3:19). Those who listen to these words with intelligence can gather from them that God did not makedeath (cf. Wisd. 1:13), neither that of the soul nor that of the body. He did not originally give the command, 'Die onthe day you eat of it'; on the contrary. He said simply, 'You will die on the day you eat of it' (Gen. 2:17). Nor did Hesay, 'Return now to earth', but 'You will return'

(Gen. 3:19). This He said as a forewarning, but He then delayed its just execution, without prejudicing theeventual outcome.

52. Death was thus to become the lot of our forefathers, just as it lies in store for us who are now living, and ourbody was rendered mortal. Death is thus a kind of protracted process or, rather, there are myriads of deaths, onedeath succeeding the next until we reach the one final and long-enduring death. For we are bom into corruption, andhaving once come into existence we are in a state of transiency until we cease from this constant passing away andcoming to be. We are never truly the same, although we may appear to be so to those who do not observe us closely.Just as a flame that catches one end of a slender reed changes continually, and its existence is measured by thelength of the reed, so we likewise are ever changing, and our measure is the length of life appointed to each of us.

53. That we should not be entirely ignorant of the superabundance of His

compassion for us and the abyss of Hiswisdom. God deferred man's death, allowing him to live for a considerably longer time. From the first God showsthat His discipline is merciful or, rather, that He delays a just chastisement so that we do not utterly despair. He alsogranted time for repentance and for a new life pleasing to Him, while through the succession of generations Heeased the sorrow produced by death. He increased the human race with descendants so that initially the number ofthose being bom would greatly exceed the number of those who died. In the place of one man, Adam, who becamepitiable and impoverished through the sensible beauty of a tree, God brought forth many men who by means ofthings perceptible to the senses became blessedly enriched with divine wisdom, with virtue, with knowledge anddivine favor: for example, Seth, Enos, Enoch, Noah, Melchisedec, Abraham, and those who were theircontemporaries or who lived before them and after them, and who proved to be their equals, or nearly so. But therewas no one among these great men who passed his life utterly free of sin, so that he might retrieve the defeat whichour forefathers had suffered, heal the wound at the root of our race and be sufficient warranty for the sanctification.

blessing and return to life of all who followed. God foreknew this; and during the course of time He chose outpeople from among the races and tribes who would produce that celebrated staff from which would blossom theFlower that was to accomplish the saving economy of our whole race (cf Num. 17:8; Isa. 11:1).

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54. 0 the depth of God's riches, wisdom and compassion (cf. Rom. 11:33)! Had there been no death and had ourrace not become mortal prior to death - for it is from a mortal root - we should not in fact have been enriched withthe firstfmit of immortality, nor should we have been called into the heavens, nor would our nature have beenenthroned 'above every principality and power' (Eph. 1:21) 'at the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens' (Heb.8:1). Thus God in His wisdom, power and compassion knows how to change for the better the lapses we suffer as aresult of our freely-willed perversion.

55. Many may blame Adam for being so easily persuaded by that wicked counselor and for rejecting the divinecommandment, thus becoming the agent of death for us all. Yet to wish to taste a deadly plant before actually doingso, and to desire to eat of such a plant after having learned by experience that it is deadly, are not the same thing.The man who drinks poison knowing that it is poison, and so wretchedly causes his own death, is more culpablethan he who takes poison and so kills himself without knowing beforehand that it is poison. Therefore each of us ismore culpable and guilty than Adam. But, you might ask, is that tree really within us? Do we still have acommandment from God forbidding us to eat from that tree? Perhaps exactly that same tree is not within us, yet thecommandment of God is with us even now. And if we obey it, and try to lead our life in accordance with it, it freesus from punishment for all our sins, as well as from the ancestral curse and condemnation. But if we now reject it,and choose instead the provocation and counsel of the evil one, we cannot but fall away from the life and fellowshipof paradise and be cast into the gehenna of everlasting fire with which we were threatened.

56. What, then, is the divine commandment now laid upon us? It is repentance, the essence of which is neveragain to touch forbidden things. We were expelled from the land of divine delight, we were justly shut out fromGod's paradise, and we have fallen into this pit where we are condemned to dwell together with dumb creatureswithout hope of returning - in so far as it depends on us - to the paradise we have lost. But He who initially passed ajust sentence of punishment or, rather, justly permitted punishment to come upon us, has now in His great goodness,compassion and mercy descended for our sake to us. And He became a human being like us in all things except sinso that by His likeness to us He might teach us anew and rescue us; and He gave us the saving counsel andcommandment of

repentance, saying: 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has drawn near' (Matt. 3:2). Prior to the incarnation of theLogos of God the kingdom of heaven was as far from us as the sky is from the earth; but when the King of heavencame to

dwell amongst us and chose to unite Himself with us, the kingdom of heaven drew near to us all.

57. Since the Logos of God through His descent to us has brought the kingdom of heaven close to us, let us notdistance ourselves from it by leading an unrepentant life. Let us rather flee the wretchedness of those who sit 'indarkness and the shadow of death' (Isa. 9:2). Let us acquire the fruits of repentance: a humble disposition,compunction and spiritual grief, a gentle and merciful heart that loves righteousness and pursues purity, peaceful,peace-making, patient in toil, glad to endure persecution, loss, outrage, slander and suffering for the sake of truthand righteousness. For the kingdom of heaven or, rather, the King of heaven - ineffable in His generosity - is withinus (cf Luke 17:21): and to Him we should cleave through acts of repentance and patient endurance, loving as muchas we can Him who so dearly has loved us.

58. Absence of passions and the possession of virtue constitute love for God; for hatred of evil, resulting in theabsence of passions, introduces in its place the desire for and acquisition of spiritual blessings. How could the loverand possessor of such blessings not love God above all, the Master who is Benediction itself, the only provider andguardian of every good thing? For in a special way such a person is in God, and by means of love he also bears Godwithin himself, in accordance with the words, 'He who dwells in love dwells in God, and God in him' (1 John 4:16).Thus we can see both that love for God is begotten from the virtues and that the virtues are bom of love. For thisreason the Lord said at one point in the Gospel, 'He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one wholoves Me' (John 14:21), and at another point, 'He who loves Me will keep My commandments' (cf. John 14:23). Butwithout love the works of virtue are not praiseworthy or profitable to the man who practices them, and the same istrue of love without works. St Paul makes this folly clear with reference to works when he writes to the Corinthians,'If I do this and that, but have no love, it profits me nothing' (cf. 1 Cor. 13:1-3); and with reference to love thedisciple especially beloved by Christ writes, 'Let us not love in word or tongue but in action and truth' (1 John 3:18).

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59. The sublime and worshipful Father is the Father of Truth itself, that is, of the Only-Begotten Son; and theHoly Spirit is a spirit of truth, as the Logos of truth proclaimed (cf John 14:17). Those who worship the Father 'inSpirit and in Truth', and who believe accordingly, are activated by Them. As St Paul says, 'It is through the Spiritthat we worship and pray' (cf. Rom: 8:26), while the Only-Begotten Son of God says, 'No one comes to the Fatherexcept through Me' (John 14:6). Hence those who worship the supreme Father 'in Spirit and in Truth' are the trueworshippers (John 4:23).

60. 'God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth' (John 4:24) - that is to say,by conceiving the Incorporeal mcorporeaUy. For thus they will truly behold Him everywhere in His spirit and Histruth. Since God is spirit. He is incorporeal. That which is incorporeal is not situated in place, nor is it circumscribedby spatial boundaries. Thus he who claims that God must be worshipped in certain restricted places within theplenitude of heaven and earth neither speaks nor worships truly. As incorporeal, God is nowhere; as God, He iseverywhere. For if there were a mountain or place or creature where God is not. He would be circumscribed bysomething. He is, therefore, everywhere, since He has no limit. But how can God be everywhere? As encompassed,not by a part, but by the whole? Assuredly not, for then once again He would be a body. Thus since He sustains andembraces everything. He is in Himself both everywhere and beyond everything, and is worshipped by His trueworshippers in His Spirit and His Truth (cf. John 4:23).

61. Since angels and souls are incorporeal beings, they are not in a particular place, yet neither are theyeverywhere. They do not sustain all things, but themselves depend on Him who sustains them. Hence they, too, arein Him who sustains and embraces all things, and they are appropriately delimited by Him. The soul, since itsustains the body with which it is created, is everywhere in the body, although not in the sense of being located in aplace or encompassed; but it itself sustains, encompasses and quickens the body, by virtue of the fact that it is inGod's image.

62. Man is created more perfectly in God's image than the angels, both because he possesses in himself asustaining and quickening power and because he has a capacity for sovereignty. There is within our soul's nature agoverning and ruling faculty, and there is also that which is naturally subservient and obedient,

namely, will,appetite.

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sense-perception, and in general everything that is sequent to the intellect and that was created by God togetherwith the intellect. And these things may be termed subservient even though, incited by a sin-loving disposition, werebel not only against the all-ruling God but also against the ruling power inherent in our nature. God, then, by virtueof our capacity for sovereignty, has given us lordship over all the earth. But angels do not have a body joined tothem and subject to their intellect. Angels that have fallen have acquired a noetic volition which is perpetually evil,while the good angels possess one that is perpetually good and has no need of a bridle. The evil one has no dominionupon earth which he has not stolen, and it is therefore evident that he was not created as ruler of the earth. The Rulerof All appointed the good angels to be overseers of the earth after our fall and our subsequent loss of rank, eventhough, due to God's compassion, the fall was not total. For, as Moses said in his Ode, God established boundariesfor the angels when He divided the nations (cf. Deut. 32:8). This division took place after Cain and Seth, whenCain's descendants were called men and Seth's descendants were called the sons of God (cf. Gen. 6:2). From thattime, it seems to me, the race from which the Only-begotten Son of God would take His flesh was foretokened bythe differentiation of names.

63. As others have also pointed out, the threefold nature of our knowledge likewise demonstrates that we, to agreater extent than the angels, are created in God's image. Indeed, this knowledge is not only threefold but alsoencompasses every form of knowledge. We alone of all creatures have a faculty of sense-perception in addition toour noetic and rational faculties. Since this faculty is united to our reason we have invented multifarious arts,sciences and forms of knowledge. Only to man is it given to farm, to build and to produce from nothing -but notfrom absolute non-being, for this pertains only to God. Indeed, even in God's case scarcely anything that He effectsin the world starts from nothing or utterly perishes, but when differently combined together things take a differentform. In addition, by the gift of God it pertains to men alone both to

make the invisible thought of the intellectaudible by uniting it with the air and to write it down so that it may be seen with and through the body. God thusleads us to a steadfast faith in the abiding presence and manifestation of the supreme Logos in the flesh. But angelshave no share whatsoever in any of these things.

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64. Even though we still bear God's image to a greater degree than the angels, yet as regards the likeness of Godwe fall far short of them. This is especially true if we compare our present state with that of the good angels.Leaving aside other matters for the present, I shall simply say that perfection of the divine likeness is accomplishedby means of the divine illumination that issues from God. There is, I think, no one who reads the divinely inspiredScriptures with diligence and understanding who does not know that the evil angels are deprived of this illuminationand are therefore 'under darkness' (Jude 6), whereas the divine intellects are entirely filled with divine illuminationand for this reason are called 'a secondary light' and 'an emanation of the Primal Light'. As emanations of the FirstLight, the good angels also possess knowledge of sensible objects, though they do not apprehend these things by anyphysical faculty of perception, but know them by means of a divine power from which nothing present, past orfuture can be hidden.

65. Whoever partakes of this divine illumination, partakes of it to a certain degree; and to a proportionate degreehe also possesses a spiritual knowledge of created things. All who assiduously study the writings of the divinelywise theologians know that the angels likewise partake of this illumination, and that it is uncreated but is not thedivine essence. Yet those who hold the views of Barlaam and Akindynos think otherwise and blaspheme this divineillumination, obstinately affirming either that it is created or that it is the essence of God. And when they affirm it tobe created, they deny that it is the light of the angels. But let the revealer of things divine, St Dionysios theAreopagite, concisely elucidate these three matters for us. 'The divine intellects,' he writes, 'move in a circularfashion, uniting themselves with the unoriginate and unending illuminations of the Beautiful and Good.' It is clear toeveryone that by divine

intellects he means the good angels. And by referring to these illuminations in the plural, hedistinguishes them from the divine essence, since this is single and is altogether Indivisible; and by calling themunoriginate and endless, what else could he mean to say except that they are uncreated?

66. Through the fall our nature was stripped of this divine illumination and resplendence. But the Logos of God

had pity upon

our disfigurement and in His compassion He took our nature upon Himself, and on Tabor He manifested it to Hiselect disciples clothed once again most brilliantly. As St John Chrysostom says. He shows what we once were andwhat we shall become through Him in the age to come, if we choose to live our present life as far as possible inaccordance with His ways.

67. Adam, before the fall, also participated in this divine illumination and resplendence, and because he was trulyclothed in a garment of glory he was not naked, nor was he unseemly by reason of his nakedness. He was far morerichly adorned than those who now deck themselves out with diadems of gold and brightly sparkling jewels. St Paulcalls this divine illumination and grace our celestial dwelling when he says, 'For this we sigh, yearning to be clothedin our heavenly habitation, since thus clothed we will not be found naked' (2 Cor. (5:2). And St Paul himselfreceived from God the pledge of this divine illumination and of our investiture in it on his way from Jerusalem toDamaskos (cf Acts 9:3). As St Gregory of Nazianzos, sumamed the Theologian, has written, 'Before he wascleansed of his persecutions Paul spoke with Him whom he was persecuting or, rather, with a brief irradiation of thegreat Light.'

68. The divine supraessentiality is never named in the plural. But the divine and uncreated grace and energy ofGod is indivisibly divided, like the sun's rays that warm, illumine, quicken and bring increase as they cast theirradiance upon what they enlighten, and shine on the eyes of whoever beholds them. In the manner,

then, of this faintlikeness, the divine energy of God is called not only one but also multiple by the theologians. Thus St Basil theGreat declares: 'What are the energies of the Spirit? Their greatness cannot be told and they are numberless. Howcan we comprehend what precedes the ages? What were God's energies before the creation of noetic reality?' Forprior to the creation of noetic reality and beyond the ages - for the ages are also noetic creations - no one has everspoken or conceived of anything created. Therefore the powers and energies of the divine Spirit - even though theyare said in theology to be multiple

- are uncreated and are to be indivisibly distinguished from the single and wholly undivided essence of the Spirit.69. The theologians affirm that the uncreated energy of God is indivisibly divided and multiple, as St Basil the

Great has explained above. And since the divine and deifying iUumination and grace is not the essence but theenergy of God, for this reason it comes forth from God not only in the singular but in multiplicity as well. It isbestowed proportionately on those who participate in it, and corresponding to the capacity of those who receive itthe deifying resplendence enters them to a greater or lesser degree.

70. Isaiah has said that these energies are seven in number, and for the Jews the number seven signifies amultiplicity. 'There shall come forth', he says, 'a rod out of the root of Jesse, and a flower shall come from it; andseven spirits shall rest upon Him: the spirit of wisdom, understanding, knowledge, reverence, counsel, strength andfear' (cf. Isa. 11:1-2). Those who hold the views of Barlaam and Akindynos dementedly maintain that these sevenspirits are created; but this error we have refuted exhaustively in our Refutation of Akindynos. Moreover, referring tothese energies of the Spirit, St Gregory of Nazianzos says, 'Isaiah likes to call the energies of the Spirit spirits.' AndIsaiah himself, the clarion voice of the prophets, not only distinguished them plainly from the divine essence by theirnumber, but also indicated the uncreated nature of these divine energies by the words 'rest upon Him'. For to 'restupon' is the privilege of a

superior dignity. How, then, could those spirits that rest upon the humanity the Lordassumed from us have a created character?

71. Our Lord Jesus Christ cast out demons 'with the finger of God', according to Luke (11:20); but Matthew says'by the Spirit of God' (12:28). St Basil explains that the finger of God is one of the Spirit's energies. If one of theseenergies is the Holy Spirit, most certainly the others are as well, as St Basil also teaches us. Yet there are not for thisreason many gods or many Spirits. These energies are processions, manifestations and natural operations of the oneSpirit and in each case the operative agent is one. Yet the heterodox make the Spirit of God a created being seventimes over when they assert that these energies are created. But let them be humiliated sevenfold, for

the prophet Zechariah calls these energies 'the seven eyes of the Lord that look upon all the earth' (4:10). And StJohn writes in Revelation, 'Grace be with you, and peace from God and from the seven spirits that are before Histhrone, and from Christ' (cf Rev. 1:4-5), thus making it clear to the faithful that these are the Holy Spirit.

72. When God the Father preannounced through the prophet Micah the birth in the flesh of His Only-begottenSon, and wished to indicate also the unoriginate nature of Christ's divinity. He said: 'And His goings forth have beenfrom the beginning, even from an eternity of days' (5:2. LXX). The holy fathers explain that these 'goings forth' arethe energies of the Godhead, for the powers and energies are the same for Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Yet thosewho strive to vindicate the views of Barlaam and Akmdynos proclaim these energies to be created. Let them,however, come to their senses, late though it is, and comprehend who it is that exists from the beginning, and who itis to whom David says: 'From eternity' - which has the same meaning as 'from an eternity of days' - 'and to eternityThou art' (Ps. 89:2). Let them intelligently consider, if they will, that when God said through His prophet that thesegoings forth are from the beginning. He did not say that they came into being, or were made or created.

And StBasil, inspired by the Spirit of God, said, not that the energies of the Spirit 'came into being', but that they existed

'prior to the creation of noetic reality' and 'beyond the ages" Only God is operative and all-powerful from eternity,and therefore He possesses pre-etemal operations and powers.

73. In obvious opposition to the saints, those who champion the views of Akindynos say that there is only onething that is uncreated, namely, the divine nature, and that anything that is in any way distinguished from the divinenature is created. Hereby they declare the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to be created beings, for there is one and thesame energy for the three, and that of which the energy is created cannot itself be uncreated. Thus that which iscreated is not God's energy - this is impossible - but what is effected and accomplished by the divine energy. This iswhy St John of Damaskos teaches that the energy, although distinct from the divine nature, is

also an essential, that is to say, a natural activity of that nature.' Since, then, it is the property of the divine energyto create, as St Cyril has said, how could this energy be something created, unless it was activated by anotherenergy, and that energy in turn by still another, and so on ad infinitum. In this way we would always be looking forthe uncreated source of the energy.

74. Because both the divine essence and the divine energy are everywhere inseparably present. God's energy isaccessible also to us creatures; for, according to the theologians it is indivisibly divided, whereas the divine nature,they say, remains totally undivided. Thus St John Chrysostom says, 'A drop of grace filled all things withknowledge; through it miracles were wrought and sins forgiven.' Here, while indicating that this drop of grace isuncreated, he hastens to make it clear that it is an energy of God but not His essence. Further, in order to show howthe divine energy diners both from the divine essence and from the hypostasis of the Spirit, he adds, 'I mean a part ofthe energy, for the Paraclete is not divided.' Therefore God's grace and energy is accessible to each one of us,

since itis divided indivisibly. But since God's essence is in every way indivisible, how could it be accessible to any createdbeing?

75. Three realities pertain to God: essence, energy, and the triad of divine hypostases. As we have seen, thoseprivileged to be united to God so as to become one spirit with Him - as St Paul said, 'He who cleaves to the Lord isone spirit with Him' (1 Cor. 6:17) - are not united to God with respect to His essence, since all the theologians testifythat with respect to His essence God suffers no participation. Moreover, the hypostatic union is fulfilled only in thecase of the Logos, the God-man. Thus those privileged to attain union with God are united to Him with respect toHis energy; and the 'spirit', according to which they who cleave to God are one with Him, is and is called theuncreated energy of the Holy Spirit, but not the essence of God, even though Barlaam and Akindynos may disagree.Thus God prophesied through His prophet saying, 'I shall pour forth', not 'My Spirit', but 'of My Spirit upon thefaithful' (cf Joel 2:28. LXX).

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76. According to St Maximos, 'Moses and David, and whoever else became vessels of divine energy by layingaside the properties of then-fallen nature, were inspired by the power of God'; and. 'They became living icons ofChrist, being the same as He is, by grace rather than by assimilation.' He farther says. The purity in Christ and in thesaints is one.' As the divine Psalmist chants, 'May the splendor of our God be upon us' (Ps. 90:17. LXX). Foraccording to St Basil, 'Spirit-bearing souls, when illumined by the Spirit, both become spiritual themselves and shedforth grace upon others. From this comes foreknowledge of things future, understanding of mysteries, apprehensionof things hidden, distribution of spiritual gifts, citizenship in heaven, the dance with the angels, unending joy, divinelargesse, likeness to God, and the desire of all desires, to become God.'

77. The angels excel men with respect to this grace, resplendence, and union with God. On this account they aresecondary luminaries, ministers of the supreme resplendence. The noetic powers and ministering spirits aresecondary

lights and irradiations of the primal Light.' The angels are 'the first luminous nature after the PrimalBeing, because they shine forth from It'. 'An angel is a secondary light, an emanation or a communication of thePrimal Light.' The divine intellects move in a circular fashion, uniting themselves with the unonginate and unendingilluminations of the Beautiful and Good', for 'God Himself and naught else is light for eternal beings'. 'What the sunis for sensory beings. God is for noetic beings. He is the primal and supreme light illumining all intelligent nature.'As St John Chrysostom says, when you hear the prophet saying, '1 saw the Lord sitting upon a throne' (Isa. 6:1),understand that he saw not God's essence but His gift of Himself, and this even more obscurely than the supremepowers behold it.

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78. Every created nature is far removed from and completely foreign to the divine nature. For if God is nature,other things are not nature; but if every other thing is nature. He is not a nature, just as He is not a being if all otherthings are beings. And if He is a being, then all other things are not beings. And if you accept this as true also forwisdom, goodness, and in general all. things that pertain to God or are ascribed to Him, then your theology will becorrect and in accordance with the saints. God both is and is said to be the nature of all beings, in so far as allpartake of Him and subsist by means of this participation: not, however, by participation in His nature - far from it -but by participation in His energy. In this sense He is the Being of all beings, the Form that is in all forms as theAuthor of form, the Wisdom of the wise and, simply, the All of all things. Moreover, He is not nature, because Hetranscends every nature; He is not a being, because He transcends every being; and He is not nor does He possess aform, because He transcends form. How, then, can we draw near to God? By drawing near to His nature? But not a

single created being has or can have any communication with or proximity to the sublime nature. Thus if anyone hasdrawn close to God, he has evidently approached Him by means of His energy. In what way? By naturalparticipation in that energy? But this is common to all created things. It is not, therefore, by

virtue of naturalqualities, but by virtue of what one achieves through free choice that one is close to or distant from God. But freechoice pertains only to beings endowed with intelligence. So among all creatures only those endowed withintelligence can be far from or close to God, drawing close to Him through virtue or becoming distant through vice.Thus such beings alone are capable of wretchedness or blessedness. Let us strive to lay hold of blessedness.

79. When created beings are compared among themselves, some are said to be naturally akin to God and othersalien. The noetic natures that are apprehended by the intellect alone are, so it is claimed, akin to the Divinity,whereas all natures subject to sense-perception are in every way alien to It; and those among them that are utterlybereft of soul and unmoving are the most remote of all. Thus, when compared among themselves, created beings aresaid to be naturally either akin or alien to God. Properly speaking, however, all of them in themselves are alien toHim by nature. Indeed, it is no more possible to say how distant noetic nature is from God than how remote sense-perception and the things of the realm of the senses are from noetic

beings. If we are, then, by nature so far removed from God, alas for us if we do not draw close to Him by freelychoosing to act well and to conduct ourselves with probity.

80. The inspired and universal tongue of the divine theologians, St John of Damaskos, says in the second of histheological chapters: 'A man who would speak or hear anything about God should know with all clarity that in whatconcerns theology and the divine economy not all things are inexpressible and not all are capable of expression, andneither are all things unknowable nor are they all knowable.' We know that those divine realities of which we desireto speak transcend speech, since such realities exist according to a principle that is transcendent. They are notoutside the realm of speech by reason of some deficiency, but are beyond the conceptual power innate within us andto which we give utterance when speaking to others. For neither can our speech explain

these realities byinterpretation, nor does our innate conceptual power have the capacity to attain them of its own accord throughinvestigation. Thus we should not permit ourselves to say anything concerning God, but rather we should haverecourse to those who in the Spirit speak of the things of the Spirit, and this is the case even when our adversariesrequire some statement from us.

81. It is said that on the portals of Plato's academy were inscribed the words, 'Let no man enter who is ignorant ofgeometry.' A person incapable of conceiving and discoursing about inseparable things as separate is in every respectignorant of geometry. For there cannot be a limit without something limited. But geometry is almost entirely ascience of limits, and it even defines and extends limits on their own account, abstracted from that which they limit,because the intellect separates the inseparable. How, then, can a person who has never learnt to separate in his

intellect a physical object from its attributes be able to conceive of nature in itselt7 For nature is not merelyinseparable from the natural elements in which it inheres, but it cannot even exist at any time without them. Howcan he conceive of universals as universals, since they exist as such in particulars and are distinguished from themonly by the intelligence and reason, being perceived intellectually as prior to the many particulars although in truththey can in no way exist apart from these many particulars? How shall he

apprehend intellectual and noetic things? How shall he understand us when we say that each intellect also hasthought and that each of our thoughts is our intellect? How shall he not ridicule us and accuse us of saying that eachman possesses two or many minds?

If, then, someone is unable to speak or conceive of things indivisible as distinct, how will he be able to discuss orbe taught anything of this sort concerning God, with respect to whom, according to the theologians, there are and aresaid to be many unions and distinctions? But although the unions pertaining to God prevail over and are prior to thedistinctions, they do not abolish them nor are they at all

impeded by them. The followers of Akindynos, however,cannot accept nor can they understand the indivisible distinction that exists in God, even when they hear us speaking- in harmony with the saints - of a divided union. For to God pertains both incomprehensibility andcomprehensibility, though He Himself is one. The same God is incomprehensible in His essence, butcomprehensible from what He creates according to His divine energies: according, that is, to His pre-etemal will forus. His pre-etemal providence concerning us. His pre-etemal wisdom with regard to us, and - to use the words of StMaximos - His infinite power, wisdom and goodness. But when Barlaam and Akindynos and those who follow intheir footsteps hear us saying these things which we are obliged to say, they accuse us of speaking of many gods andmany uncreated realities, and of making God composite. For they are ignorant of the fact that God is indivisiblydivided and is united dividedly, and yet in spite of this suffers neither multiplicity nor compositeness.

82. St Paul, the mouth of Christ, the chosen vessel, the glorious chariot of the divine name, says, 'From thecreation of the world the invisible realities of God, namely. His eternal power and divinity, may be perceived increated things by means of intellection' (Rom. 1:20). May, then, the essence of God be perceived in created thingsby means of intellection? Certainly not. This is the madness of Barlaam and Akindynos and, before them, thedelusion of Eunomios. For, prior to them but in the same manner, Eunomios in his discourses wrote that fromcreated things we may comprehend nothing less than God's

essence itself. St Paul, however, is very far from teaching any such thing. For having just stated, 'What can beknown of God is manifest' (Rom. 1:19), and having thus indicated that there exists something else beyond thatwhich can be known about God and which He Himself has made manifest to all men of intelligence, he then adds:'For from the creation of the world the invisible realities of God may be perceived in created things by means ofintellection.' You may in this way learn what it is that is knowable about God. The holy fathers explain that what isunknowable in God is His essence, while what may be

known is that which pertains to His essence, namely,goodness, wisdom, power, divinity and majesty. These St Paul also calls invisible, though they are perceived increated things by means of intellection. But how could these things, which pertain to God's essence and may beperceived in things created, be themselves created? Therefore the divine energy, mtellected through created things,is both uncreated and yet not the essence. For the divine energy is referred to not only in the singular but also in theplural.

83. In refuting Eunomios, who claimed that the essence of God is revealed by created things, St Basil the Greatwrites that 'created things manifest wisdom, art and power, but not essence'. Thus the divine energy made manifestby created things is both uncreated and yet not God's essence; and those who like Barlaam and Akindynos say thatthere is no difference between the divine essence and the divine energy are clearly Eunomians.

84. Most excellently does St Gregory of Nyssa, St Basil's bodily and spiritual brother, say in his refutation ofEunomios: 'When we perceive the beauty and grandeur of the wonders of creation, and from these and similar thingsderive other intellections concerning the Divinity, we interpret each of the intellections produced in us by its owndistinctive name. "For from the grandeur and beauty of created things the Creator is contemplated by way ofanalogy" (Wisd. 13:5). We also call the Creator the Demiurge; Powerful, in that His power is sufficient to make Hiswill reality; and Just, as the impartial judge. Likewise the term God (Theos) we have taken from His providentialand overseeing activity. In this manner, then, by the term God we have been taught about a certain partial activity ofthe divine nature, but we

have not attained an understanding of God's essence by means of this word.'

85. St Dionysios the Areopagite, the most eminent theologian after the divine apostles, having clarified thedistinction of the hypostases in God, says: 'The beneficent procession is a divine distinction, for the divine unity in atranscendently united manner multiplies and makes itself manifold through

goodness.' And a little further on hesays: 'We call divine distinction the beneficial processions of the Thearchy. For m bestowing itself upon all beingsand abundantly pouring forth participation in all good things, it is distinguished in its unity, multiplied in its

oneness, and made manifold without ceasing to be one ' Later he writes: 'These common and united distinctions - or,rather, these beneficent processions - of the whole Godhead we will try to praise to the best of our ability.'

Thus St Dionysios shows clearly that there is also another distinction in God besides the distinction of thehypostases, and this distinction that is different from that of the hypostases he calls the distinction of the Godhead.For, indeed, the distinction of the hypostases is not a distinction pertaining to the Godhead. And he says thataccording to the divine processions and energies God multiplies Himself and makes Himself manifold, and he statesin this respect that the procession may be spoken of both in the singular and in the plural. In regard to the distinctionof the hypostases, however, the Deity certainly does not multiply Himself, nor as God is He subject to distinction.For us God is a Trinity, but not triple. St Dionysios also affirms that these processions and energies are uncreated,since he calls them divine and says that they are distinctions pertaining to the whole Godhead. He likewise says thatthe very Thearchy itself multiplies and makes Itself manifold according to these divine processions and energies,though not certainly by assuming anything external. Furthermore, this most sublime of the divine hymnologistspromises to celebrate these processions; but he adds, 'to the best of our ability', in order to show that they transcendall celebration.

86. Having said that the beneficent procession is a divine

distinction, this same revealer of things divine adds: 'Yet the unconditioned communications are united withrespect to the divine distinction.' Here he groups together all the processions and energies of God and calls themcommunications. He says further that they are unconditioned, lest anyone should suppose that

these communicationsare created effects such as the individual essence of each thing that exists, or the physical life of animals, or thereason and intellect inherent in rational and noetic beings. For how could these things be unconditioned in God andat the same time be created? And how could God's unconditioned processions and communications be createdthings, since the unconditioned communication is naturally inherent in the communicator, as we see in the case oflight?

87. St Dionysios now goes on to celebrate these processions and energies with other godlike names, calling themparticipable principles and essential participable principles. In many places in his writings he shows them to besuperior to existent things, and that they are the paradigms or exemplars of existent things, pre-existing in God bymeans of a supra-essential union. How, then, could they be created? He then tells us what these paradigms are,saying: 'We call paradigms the essence-forming logoi or inner principles of existent things; they unitedly pre-exist inGod, and theology refers to them as the predeterminations and divine and sacred volitions that determine and createexistent things. It is in accordance with them that the Supra-essential both predetermines and brings forth everythingthat is.' How could me predeterminations and the divine volitions that create all existent things be themselvescreated? Is it not clear that those who maintain that these processions and energies are created degrade God'sprovidence to the level of something created? For the energy that creates individual essence, life and wisdom, and in

general makes and sustains created beings, is identical with me divine volitions and the divine participable principlesand the gifts of supernal Goodness, the Cause of all.

88. The participable principle of absolute Being in no way participates in anything, as the great Dionysios alsosays. But the other participable principles, in that they are participable principles of existent things, also participatein nothing else whatsoever, for

providence does not participate in providence, nor life in life. But in that they possess being they are said toparticipate in absolute Being, since without this they can neither exist nor be participated in, just as there can be noforeknowledge without knowledge. Thus, as essential participable principles, they are in no way created. Hence,according to St Maximos, they never began to be and they are seen to pertain to God in an essential manner, andthere was never a time when they were not. But when the followers of Barlaam impiously suppose that because lifeitself, goodness itself and so forth, share in the common denomination of existent things they are therefore created,they do not comprehend that although they are called existent things, they are also superior to existent things, as StDionysios says. Those who for this reason place the essential participable principles among created things couldeasily regard the Holy Spirit as created, whereas St Basil the Great says that the Spirit shares in names befitting theDivinity.

89. Should someone claim that only absolute Being is a participable principle since it alone does not participate inanything but is solely participated in, whilst the other participable principles participate in it, he should know that hedoes not think aright with regard to the other participable principles. For living things or holy things or good thingsare said to live and to become holy and good by participation, not simply because they exist and participate inabsolute Being, but because they partake of absolute life, holiness and goodness. But absolute life - and the sameapplies to other such realities - does not become absolute life by participation in some other absolute life. Asabsolute life, it is among those realities that are participated in, not among those that participate. How could thatwhich does not participate in life, but is itself participated in by living things and quickens them, be somethingcreated? And one may say the same with regard to the other participable principles.

90. Let St Maximos now lend us his support. He writes in his Scholia that the providence creating existent thingsis identical with the processions of God. He says: 'The creative providences and good-nesses' - those that bestowindividual essence, life and wisdom - 'are

common to the tn-hypostatic differentiated Unity ' By stating that these providences and goodnesses are manyand distinct, he shows that they are not the essence of God, since that is one and ahogether indivisible. But becausethey are common to the tri-hypostatic differentiated Unity, he shows us that they are not identical with the Son or theHoly Spirit, for neither the Son nor the Holy Spirit is an energy common to the three hypostases. Yet by stating thatthey are not only providences and goodnesses but are also creative, he shows them to be uncreated. For if this werenot the case, then the creative power would itself be created by another creative power, and that in turn by another,and so on to the uttermost absurdity, not even stopping at infinity. Thus God's processions and energies areuncreated, and none of them is either divine essence or hypostasis.

91. In the incomparable superabundance of His goodness He who brought forth and adorned the universeestablished it as multiform. He willed that some things should simply possess being, while others should possess lifein addition to being. Of these latter He willed that some should possess noetic life, that others should enjoy merely asensible life, while others again should possess a life mingled of both. When this last category of beings hadreceived from Him rational and noetic life. He willed that by the free inclination of their will towards Him theyshould achieve union with Him and thus live in a divine and supernatural manner, having been vouchsafed Hisdeifying grace and energy. For His will is generation for things that exist, whether for those brought forth out ofnon-being, or for those being brought to a better state; and this takes place in diverse ways. Because of the diversityof the divine will with respect to existent things, the one providence and goodness of God - or, in other words. God'sturning towards inferior beings by reason of His goodness - both is, and is thus called by the divinely wisetheologians, many providences and goodnesses, for they are indivisibly divided and differentiated among divisiblethings. Thus one is called God's power of foreknowledge, and another His creative and sustaining power. Further,according to the great Dionysios, some bestow individual essence, some life, and some wisdom. Now each of thesepowers is common to Father, Son and

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Holy Spirit, and in each good and divine volition with respect to us it is Father, Son and Holy Spirit that are itsessence-bestowing, life-bestowing and wisdom-bestowing energy and power. These St Dionysios callsunconditioned and undiminishable communications, elevating them above all created things and teaching us thatthey inhere by nature in Him who communicates them.

92. Just as the sun without diminution communicates heat and light to those who participate in them, and itselfpossesses these qualities as its inherent and essential energies, so the divine communications, since they inherewithout diminution in Him who bestows communion, are His natural and essential energies. Thus they are alsouncreated. When the sun sets beneath the horizon and is no longer visible, not even a trace of its light remains; yetwhen it is visible, the eye that receives its light cannot but be mingled with it and united by it to the wellspring of

light. The sun's warmth, however, and its effects which contribute to the generation and growth of sensible things,and to the manifold diversity of humors and qualities, do hot desert these creatures, even when there is no contactwith the sun through the sun's rays. In the same manner as indicated in this inadequate image taken from sensiblereality, only those who aspire after the supernal and most divine light participate integrally in deifying grace and byit are united to God. All other beings are effects of the creative energy, brought forth from nothing by grace as a freegift but not illumined by grace, which is the same as God's resplendence.

93. This resplendence and deifying energy of God, that deifies those who participate in it, constitutes divine grace,but it is not the nature of God. This does not mean that God's nature is distant from those who have received grace -and this is Akmdynos' ridiculous slander - for God's nature is everywhere; but it means that it is not participable,since no created thing, as we have already shown, is capable of participating in it. The divine energy and grace ofthe Spirit, being everywhere present and remaining inseparable from the Spirit, is imparticipable, as though absent,for those who on account of their impurity are unfit to participate in it. Just as faces, so it is said, are not reflected byevery material, but only by such materials as possess smoothness and transparency, so the energy of the Spirit is notfound in all souls, but only in those possessing no perversity or deviousness. Again, it is said that the Holy Spirit ispresent to all,

but He manifests His power only in those who are purified from the passions, and does

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not manifest it in those whose intellect is still confused by the defilement of sin.

94. The light of the sun is inseparable from the sun's rays and from the heat which they dispense; yet for thosewho receive the rays but have no eyes the light is imparticipable and they sense only the heat coming from the rays.For those bereft of eyes cannot possibly perceive light. In the same way, but to a greater extent, no one who enjoysthe divine radiance can participate in the essence of the Creator. For there is absolutely no creature that possesses thecapacity to perceive the Creator's nature.

95. Here let St John, the Baptist of Christ, as well as St John who was more beloved by Christ than the otherdisciples, and St John Chrysostom, now bear witness with us that the participated divine energy is neither creatednor the essence of God. St John the Evangelist does so by what he writes in his Gospel, the Forerunner and Baptistof Christ when he says: 'It is not by measure that the Spirit is given to Christ by God the Father' (cf. John 3:34). StJohn Chrysostom explains this passage when he states: 'Here "Spirit" means the energy of the Spirit. For all of usreceive the energy of the Spirit by measure, but Christ possesses the Spirit's entire energy in full and withoutmeasure. But if His energy is without measure, how much more so is His essence.' By calling the energy 'Spirit' - or,rather, the very Spirit of God - as the Baptist did, and by saying that the energy is without measure, Chrysostomshowed its uncreated character. Again, by saying that we receive it by measure he indicated the difference betweenthe uncreated energy and the uncreated essence of God. For no one ever receives the essence of God, not even if allmen are taken collectively, each one receiving in part according to his degree of purity. Chrysostom then goes on toreveal another difference between the uncreated essence and the uncreated energy, for he says, 'If the energy of the

Spirit is without measure, how much more so is His essence '

96. If, according to the absurdities of Akmdynos and those who share his views, the divine energy does not m anyrespect differ from the divine essence, then the act of creating, which is something that pertains to the energy, willnot in any respect differ from the act of

begetting and the act of procession, -which are things that pertain to the essence. But if the act of creating is notdistinct from that of begetting and of procession, then created things will in no way differ from Him who is begottenand Him who is sent forth. But if this is the case - as according to these men it is - then both the Son of God and theHoly Spirit will in no way differ from creatures: all created things will be begotten and sent forth by God the Father,creation will be deified, and God will share His rank with creatures. For this reason St Cyril, affirming thedistinction between God's essence and energy, says, 'The act of generation pertains to the divine nature, whereas theact of creating pertains to His divine energy.' Then he clearly underscores what he has affirmed by saying, 'Natureand energy are not identical.'

97. If the divine essence does not in any respect differ from the divine energy, then the act of generation and ofprocession will in no respect differ from the act of creating. But God the Father creates through the Son in the HolySpirit. Thus, in the view of Akmdynos and his adherents. He also begets and sends forth through the Son in the HolySpirit.

98. If the divine essence does not in any respect differ from the divine energy, then neither does it differ from thedivine will. Thus the Son, who alone is begotten from the Father's essence, is according to these people also createdfrom the Father's will.

99. If the divine essence does not in any respect differ from the divine energy, and if the holy fathers testify thatGod has many energies - for, as shown above. He has creative providences and goodnesses - then God also hasmany essences. This is a view that no member of the Christian race has ever uttered or entertained.

100. If the energies of God do not in any respect differ from the divine essence, then neither will they differ fromone another. Therefore God's will is in no way different from His foreknowledge, and consequently either God doesnot foreknow all things - because He does not will all that occurs - or else He wills evil also, since He foreknows all.This means either that He does not foreknow all things, which is the same as saying that He is not God, or that He isnot good, which is also the same as saying that He is not God. Thus God's

foreknowledge does differ from His will, and so both differ from the divine essence.

101. If the divine energies do not differ from one another, then God's creative power is not distinct from Hisforeknowledge. But in that case, since God began to create at a particular moment. He also began to foreknow at aparticular moment. Yet if God did not have foreknowledge of all things before the ages how could He be God?

102. If God's creative energy does not differ in any respect from divine foreknowledge, then created things areconcurrent with God's foreknowledge. Thus because God unongmately has foreknowledge and what is foreknown isunoriginately foreknown, it follows that God creates unoriginately, and therefore that created things will have beencreated unoriginately. But how shall He be God if His creatures are in no way subsequent to Him?

103. If God's creative energy in no respect differs from His foreknowledge, then the act of creating is not subjectto His will, since His foreknowledge is not so subject. In that case God will create, not by an act of volition, butsimply because it is His nature to create. But how will He be God if He creates without volition?

104. God Himself is within Himself, since the three divine hypostases co-naturally and eternally cleave to oneanother and unconfusedly interpenetrate each other. Yet God is also in the universe and the universe is within God,the one sustaining, the other being sustained by Him. Thus all things participate in God's

sustaining energy, but notin His essence. Hence the theologians say that divine omnipresence also constitutes an energy of God.

105. If we have conformed ourselves to God and have attained that for which we are created, namely, deification -for they say that God created us in order to make us partakers of His own divinity (cf 2 Pet. 1:4) - then we are inGod since we are deified by Him, and God is in us since it is He who deifies us. Thus we, too, participate in thedivine energy - though in a different way from the universe as a whole - but not in the essence of God. Hence thetheologians say that 'divinity'' is also an appellation of the divine energy.

106. The supra-essential, supra-existential nature that transcends the Godhead and goodness, in that it is more thanGod and more than goodness, and so on, can be neither described nor conceived nor in any way contemplated, sinceit transcends all thmgs and is surpassingly unknowable, being established by uncircumscribed power beyond the

supracelestial intelligences, and always utterly ungraspable and ineffable for all. Neither in the present age nor inthe age to come is there any name with which it can be named, nor can the soul form any concept of it or any wordexpress it; and there can be no contact with or participation in it, whether sensible or noetic, nor any imagining of itat all. Thus the theologians hold that the closest idea we can have of this nature is that of its perfect

incomprehensibility attained by means of negation, or apophasis, since this nature is transcendentally privative of allthat exists or can be expressed. Hence he who possesses knowledge of the truth beyond all truth, if he is to name itcorrectly, cannot legitimately call it either essence or nature. Yet it is the cause of all things and all things pertain toit and exist on its account; and it is prior to all things and in a simple and undetermined manner it precontains allthings in itself. Thus it can be named loosely and inexactly from all things. Accordingly it can be called both essenceand nature, though property speaking we should name it the creative procession and energy whereby God createsindividual essences;

for the great Dionysios says that this is 'the proper theological name for the essence of Him whotruly is'.

107. One can find the term 'nature' applied also to natural attributes, both in the case of created beings and in thecase of God. Thus St Gregory of Nazianzos says somewhere in his poems, 'It is the nature of my King to bestowblessedness.' Now bestowing is not the nature of anything; it is, rather, the natural attribute of one who is beneficent.Similarly, with regard to fire one can say that its nature is to ascend upwards and to cast light upon those who beholdit. Yet the motion in itself is not the nature of fire, nor is the production of light; rather its nature is the origin of themotion. Hence natural attributes are also called nature. This is confirmed by the great Dionysios when he sayssomewhere, 'It is the nature of the Good to bring forth and to save,' meaning that these acts are attributes of thedivine nature. Thus when you hear the fathers saying that God's essence is imparticipable, you should realize thatthey refer to the essence that does not depart from itself and is unmanifest. Again, when they say that it isparticipable, you should realize that they refer to the procession, manifestation and energy that are God's naturalattributes.

When you accept both statements in this sense you will be in agreement with the fathers.

108. Even the smallest portion of an essence possesses all that essence's powers. Thus a spark is both brilliant andilluminating, it melts and bums whatever comes close to it, it is self-moving by nature and rises upwards and, inbrief, it is whatever fire is, of which it is a part. Similarly a drop of water possesses every quality that water has, ofwhich it is a drop; and a nugget possesses whatever quality is possessed by the metal of which it is a fragment. Thusif we participate in the unmanifest essence of God, then, whether we participate in the whole of it or a part of it, wewould be all-powerful, and in the same way each existent being would be all-powerful. But all-powerfulness is not aquality that even all mankind or all creation collectively possesses. St Paul shows this with abundant

clarity whenreferring to those who share in the deiiying gifts of the Spirit; for he testifies that not all the gifts of the Spirit belongto each individual. 'To one', he says, 'is given the quality of wisdom, to another the quality of knowledge, to anothersome other gift of the same Spirit' (cf 1 Cor. 12:8). And St John Chrysostom clearly thwarts in advance the error ofBarlaam and Akmdynos when he says, 'A man does not possess all the gifts, lest he think that grace is nature.' Yetno intelligent person would suppose that grace, here distinguished from the divine nature, is created, for obviouslyno one would be in any danger of supposing a created thing to be the nature of God. Moreover, the grace of the

Spirit, though differing from the divine nature, is not separated from it; rather, it draws those privileged to receive ittowards union with the Holy Spirit.

109. An essence has as many hypostases as there are partakers of it. We make as many hypostases of fire as thenumber of lamps we light from a single lamp. Yet if, as our opponents assert. God's essence is participated in, and iseven participated in by everyone, this means that His essence is not tn-hypostatic, but multi-hypostatic. Who trainedin the divine doctrine will not recognize this as the absurdity of the Messalians? For the Messalians maintain thatthose who have

attained the height of virtue participate in the essence of God. Yet the followers of Akindynos in their zeal tosurpass this blasphemy say that not only do certain people distinguished in virtue participate in the divine essence,but all beings in general participate in it; and they say this on the spurious pretext that the divine essence iseverywhere present. But St Gregory of Nazianzos, eminent in theology, long ago refuted the dotty views of both theMessalians and the Akindymsts when he said, 'He is "Christ", the Anointed, on account of His divinity; for it is thedivinity that anoints His human nature. This anointing sanctifies the human nature not merely with an energy, as isthe case with all others who are anointed, but with the presence of the whole of Him who anoints.' With one voicethe holy fathers have declared that the divinity dwells in those who are fittingly purified, but not as regards itsnature. Thus a person does not

participate in God either according to His essence or according to His hypostases, forneither of these can be in any way divided, nor can they be communicated to any one at all. Hence God is in thisrespect totally inaccessible to all, though indeed He is also everywhere present. But the energy and power commonto the tri-hypostatic nature is variously and proportionately divided among those who participate in it, and istherefore accessible to those who are blessed with it. For, as St Basil says, 'the Holy Spirit is not participated in tothe same degree by each person who receives Him; rather. He distributes His energy according to the faith of theparticipant; for though He is simple in essence. He is diverse in His powers.'

110. That which is said to participate in something possesses a part of that in which it participates; for if itparticipates not in a part only but in the whole, then strictly speaking it does, not participate in but possesses thatwhole. Hence, if the participant must necessarily participate in a part, what is participated in is divisible. But theessence of God is in every way indivisible, and therefore it is altogether unparticipable. On the other hand, theproperty of the divine energy is to be divisible, as the holy father St John Chrysostom frequently affirms. Hence it isthe divine energy that is participated in by those who have been privileged to receive deifying grace. Listen, then,once

more to St John Chrysostom, as he clearly elucidates both these points, namely, that it is the energy that isindivisibly divided and also participated in, and not the imparticipable essence from which the divine energyproceeds. Citing the gospel words, 'Of His fullness we have all received' (John 1: 16), he says, 'If in the case of fire,where what is divided is both essence and body, we both divide it and do not divide it, how much more so is this thecase with respect to the energy, especially the energy of the unembodied essence?'

111. Further, that which participates in something according to its essence must necessarily possess a commonessence with that in which it participates and be identical to it in some respect. But who has ever heard that God andwe possess

in some respect the same essence? St Basil the Great says, 'The energies of God come down to us, butthe essence remains inaccessible.' And St Maximos also says, 'He who is deified through grace will be everythingthat God is, without possessing identity of essence.' Thus it is impossible to participate in God's essence, even forthose who are deified by divme grace. It is, however, possible to participate in the divine energy. To this does themeasured light of truth here below lead me, to behold and experience the splendor of God,' states St Gregory ofNazianzos. As the Psalmist says, 'May the splendor of our God be upon us' (Ps. 90:17. LXX). There is a singleenergy of God and the saints,' St Maximos clearly writes, who was one of their number; they are 'living icons ofChrist, being the same as He is, by grace rather than by assimilation.'

112. God is identical within Himself, since the three divine hypostases mutually coinhere and interpenetratenaturally, totally, eternally, mseparably, and yet without mingling or confusion, so that their energy is also one. Thiscould never be the case among creatures. There are similarities among creatures of the same genus, but since eachindependent existence, or hypostasis, operates by itself, its energy is uniquely its own. The situation is different withthe three divine hypostases that we worship, for there the energy is truly one and the

same. For the activity of the divine will is one, originating from the Father, the primal Cause, issuing through theSon, and made manifest in the Holy Spirit This is clear from the created effects, for it is from the effects that weknow every natural energy. Although they are similar, different nests are made by different swallows, and differentpages are written by different scribes, though the materials used are the same. But with the Father, Son and HolySpirit it is not the case that each one of the hypostases has His own particular effect. Rather, all creation is the smglework of the three. Thus we have been initiated by the fathers to recognize from creation that the divine energy of thethree Persons whom we worship is one and the same, and that they do not each possess an individual energy whichmerely resembles that of the other two.

113. Since Father, Son and Holy Spirit unconfusedly and unmix-edly interpenetrate one another, we know thatthey possess an activity and energy that is strictly one and unique. The life or power mat the Father possesses inHimself is not different from that in the Son, since the Son possesses the same life and power as the Father; and thesame can be said of the Son and me Holy Spirit. As for those who think that the divine energy does not differ fromthe divine essence because our life is nothing else but God Himself, and He Himself is pre-etemal life not in relationto something else but in Himself, they are both ignorant and heretics. They are ignorant because they have not yetlearnt that the supreme Trinity is none other than God Himself, and that the supreme Unity is none other than GodHimself, though this in no way prevents the Unity from being distinguished from the Trinity. They are hereticsbecause they abolish both essence and energy, the one through the other. For what is dependent on another is notessence; and what is self-subsistent is not dependent on another. Thus if the essence and the energy in no way differfrom each other, they abolish each other, or, rather, 1 should say that they expel from the number of the godfearingthose who say that there is no difference between them.

114. We, on the contrary, confess that the Son of God is our life as regards cause and energy, and that He is alsolife in Himself absolutely and mdependently of all; and we declare mat He possesses both these attributesuncreatedly. We likewise confess the same thing with reference to the Father and the Holy Spirit. Thus this life ofours, that as the cause of living things quickens us, is none other than Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For our tri-hypostatic God is said to be our life as

being its cause. And when in theology the divine life is spoken of not as cause, nor in relation to something else,but absolutely and in itself, again it is not anything other than the Father and also the Son and the Holy Spirit. Suchdoctrines in no way give offence to those who affirm that God is uncreated, not only as regards His essence andhypostases, but also as regards the divine energy that is common to the three. We proclaim in our theology one Godin

three hypostases, possessing a single essence, power and energy, as well as whatever other realities pertain to theessence - realities that are called in Scripture assembly and fullness of divinity (cf Col. 2:9), and are perceived andtheologically declared to belong to each of the three holy hypostases.

115. Those who reject this divine energy, saying sometimes that it is created, and sometimes that it differs in norespect from the divine essence, fabricate at other times a new heresy, teaching the doctrine that the sole uncreatedenergy is the only-begotten Son of the Father. In order to validate this view they appeal to the words of St Cyril:'The life that the Father possesses in Himself is nothing other than the Son, and the life that is in the Son is nothingother than the Father. Thus He speaks the truth when He says, "1 am in the Father and the Father is in Me" (John14:11).' Briefly and so far as we can we will now clarify the sense of the saint's words, and we will refute theimpiety of those who in their undisceming darkness oppose us. They wrongly maintain that the Son is not onlyunlike the Father, but is also posterior to the Father, because He possesses the faculty of life and life itself not bynature, but as something added from without, and by participation and adventitiously, and because He takes and

receives life from the Father, according to the words of Scripture, 'For as the Father has life in Himself, so has Hegranted the Son also to have life in Himself (John 5:26).

St Cyril counters those who interpret the text of the Gospel in such an impious way. 'God', he says, 'is called lifeby virtue of His energy, as the Quickener of living things. He is Himself the life of things that naturally live, sinceHe is the Creator of nature, just as He is also the Bestower of grace on those who live in a divine manner. But God isalso said to be life in Himself, not in relation to another, but mdependently

and in every way unconditionally.' The divine Cyril wanted to show that in neither of these two cases does theSon differ from the Father, and that the fact that the Son receives something from .the Father does not indicate thatHe is

posterior to the Father, or that where His essence is concerned the Son is second to the Father in a temporalsense. Thus among many other things St Cyril says, 'It is not as receiving something that the Son possesses being,but as being He receives something.' Then he adds in conclusion: 'Therefore, the fact that the Son receivessomething from the Father does not mean that where His essence is concerned the Son is second to the Father in atemporal sense.' Here, then, he does not accept that the life which the Father has and which the Son receives fromthe Father is the divine essence.

116. Further, the divine Cyril shows that although the Son of God is said by virtue of His energy to be life inrelation to living things, since He quickens them and is called their life, yet not even in this is He unlike the Father;rather, by nature He is their life and He quickens them, just as the Father does. Then, continuing, St Cyril writes, 'Ifthe Son is not life by nature, how can He be speaking the truth when He says, "He that believes in Me has eternallife" (John 6:47), and again, "My sheep hear my voice, and I give them eternal life" (John 10:27-28)?' Shortly afterSt Cyril writes, 'To those who believe in Him He promises to give the life that belongs to and inheres in Himsubstantially. How, then, is it possible to think that the Son did not have this life but received it from the Father?'They should be ashamed, then, to say in their madness that, because this life is a natural attribute of God, therefore itmust be identical with God's essence. For neither the Father, nor the Son, nor the Holy Spirit offers us believers theiressence. We must dismiss such impiety.

117. The great Cyril confutes in a similar way those who are infected with Barlaam's disease when he says shortlyafterwards, 'In proceeding from the Father the Son takes with Him all that is by nature the Father's. Now one of theFather's attributes is life.' By the words, 'one of the Father's attributes', he clearly demonstrates that the

Father has many attributes. In the opinion of those who think that life is the essence of God, this must mean thatGod has many essences. Yet, apart from this

impiety, to say that being and attribute are the same, except perhapswith regard to some particular relation, also displays excessive ignorance. And even more senseless is it to say thatbeing and attributes - in other words, the one and what is more than one - are in no way different. For it is utterly andcompletely impossible and senseless to assert that something should be both one and many with respect to the samething.

118. In stating, then, that life is one of the Father's attributes, the divine Cyril shows that in this passage, whenreferring to life', he does not mean the essence of God. But let us produce his exact words where he states that Godhas many attributes. For slightly later he says, 'Many excellent properties pertain to the Father, but the Son is notwithout them either.' How could these many things that pertain to God be the divine essence? Wishing to indicatesome of these excellent properties that pertain to the Father, he refers to the words of St Paul, To the immortal,invisible, and only wise God' (1 Tim. 1:17). Thus he shows even more clearly that none of God's attributesconstitutes the essence. How, indeed, could immortality, invisibility, and in general all the things said of Godprivatively and apophatically, whether collectively or severally, be equated with the essence? For there is no essenceunless there exists this or that definite object. If to the divine attributes described apophatically are added those thatthe theologians ascribe to God cataphatically, it is evident that none of them can be shown to disclose God's essence,even though when necessary we apply all the names of these attributes to the supra-essential Being that is absolutelynameless.

119. When attributes are in question, we necessarily ask what they pertain to. If they do not pertain to anything,they are not attributes, and it is wrong to call them such. But if the attributes pertain to any one thing, and if this isthe essence, which according to our adversaries in no way differs from each one of the attributes and all of themtogether, then, since there are many attributes, the one essence will be many essences; and that thing which is one inessence will be many in essence, and therefore will have many essences. But if it is one and also has many essences,it is necessarily composite. Delivering his adherents

from such impious and ignorant opinions, the divine Cyril says in his Treasuries: 'If that which pertains to Godalone is inevitably also His essence. He will be composed of many essences. For there are many thmgs that pertainby nature to God alone and to no other being. Indeed, the divine Scriptures call Him King, Lord, incorruptible,invisible, and say many thousands of other things about Him. If, then, each of His attributes is ranked with essence,how can the simple God not be composite? But this is a most absurd view to hold.'

120. By many arguments St Cyril, wise in things divine, shows that even though the Son is life and is said topossess life as energy, since He quickens us and is the life of living things, still He is not on this account unlike the

Father, for the Father, too, bestows hfe. He wanted also to show that even when the Son is said to be hfe and to havehfe not in relation to something else but altogether independently and absolutely, yet in this case also He will not beunlike the Father with respect to life. For when we call God our life, not in so far as He bestows life on us, butaltogether independently and absolutely, then we are naming His essence on the basis of the energy that pertains toHim by nature, as we do also when we call Him wisdom, goodness, and so on. Wishing, then, to demonstrate this, StCyril says: 'When we say that "the Father has life in Himself" (John 5:16), we are at the same time calling the Sonlife, for He is other than the Father only with respect to His hypostasis, but not with respect to life. For this reasonthere is no question of compositeness or twofoldedness in the Father. And again, when we say that the Son has lifein Himself, and we mean life absolute, we are at the same time calling the Father life. For as the Father is life, not inrelation to anything else, but independently and in Himself, the Father and the Son coinhere in one another, as theSon Himself said: "I am in the Father and the Father is in Me" (John 14:11).' In this way, then, the divine Cyrildemonstrates that the life that is in the Father - namely, the Son - is somehow both other and not other than theFather. But our opponents say that the life that is in the Father is in no way other than the Father and is entirelyidentical with Him since it is in no respect different By proposing such things and affirming that this life is the Only-begotten Son of the Father, they necessarily range

themselves not with the doctrines of the venerable Cyril but with those of Sabellius.

121. Do not the followers of Barlaam and Akmdynos roundly condemn themselves when they claim that thedivine Cyril contradicts himself? To affirm sometimes one thing, sometimes another, when both affirmations aretrue, is a distinguishing mark of every orthodox theologian. But to contradict oneself does not betoken an intelligentperson. St Cyril quite rightly says that by nature the Son has life, which He gives to those who believe in Him. Bythis he shows that not only the essence of God - which no one receives - but also His natural energy is called life.This life has been received as a gift of grace by those whom He has quickened, and thus they themselves are able tosave - that is to say, to render immortal in spirit - those who previously were not alive in spirit, and sometimes torestore people lifeless in one of their limbs or even in their whole body. How could St Cyril, who has demonstratedthese things so excellently and clearly, subsequently assert, with the intention of denying what he has said about thedivine energy, that only God's essence is called life? For this is what is senselessly maintained by those who nowpervert or, rather, misrepresent, what St Cyril says.

122. Not just the Only-begotten Son of God but also the Holy Spirit is called energy and power by the saints, andthis because the Son and the Spirit possess precisely the same powers and energies as the Father. For according to StDionysios God is called power, 'as both possessing it originally in Himself and transcending all power'. Therefore,whenever one of those two distinct hypostases, the Son and the Holy Spirit, is called power or energy, it isunderstood or expressed that He is so together with the Father. Thus St Basil the Great says. The Holy Spirit is asanctifying power that possesses essence, existence and hypostatic subsistence.' But in his writing about the Spirit he

also shows that the energies of the Spirit are none of them self-subsistent, in this way clearly distinguishing them inturn from created things; for what come forth from the Spirit as created objects

are independent existences, for God creates them as essences with specific qualities.

123. Apophatic theology does not contradict or confute cataphatic theology, but it shows that although statementsmade cataphatically about God are true and reverent, yet they do not apply to God as they might to us. For example.God possesses knowledge of existent things, and we, too, possess this in some cases. But we know things in so faras they exist and have come into existence, whereas God does not know them solely in this way, since He knowsthem just as well even prior to their coming into existence. Thus he who says that God does not know existent thingsas existent does not contradict him who says that God knows existent things and knows them as existent. There isalso a cataphatic theology which has the force of apophatic theologv, as when one says that all knowledge isaffirmed of some object, namely, the thing known, while God's knowledge does not refer to any object. This is thesame as saying God does not know existent things as existent, and He does not have knowledge of existent things -that is to say, does not have it as we do. In this way it can be said that in terms of His pre-eminence God does notexist But he who asserts this in order to show that people who say God exists are not speaking correctly, clearlyemploys apophatic theology not in a way that connotes pre-eminence, but as though it connoted deficiency andsignified in this case that God has absolutely no existence whatsoever. This is the uttermost impiety, of which, alas,those are guilty who by means of apophatic theology attempt to deny that God has both an uncreated essence anduncreated energy. We, however, embrace both modes of theology, since the one does not exclude the other - rather,by means of each we confirm ourselves in a sound way of thought.

124. I think a brief patristic quotation will be sufficient to confute utterly all the sophistries of Barlaam's followersand prove them to be sheer folly. St Gregory of Nazianzos says: 'The Unoriginate, the First Originate and the Onewho is with the First Originate, constitute one God. But the First Originate is not, because it is the First Originate,separated from the Unoriginate. For its origin is not its nature, any more than to be without origin is the nature of theother. These things pertain to the nature, but are not the nature itself" What, then? Shall we say that because originand unongmateness are not nature but

pertain to the nature that they are therefore created? Not unless we are out of our mind. And is God compositebecause origin and unoriginateness are uncreated and pertain to His nature? Certainly not; for though they pertain toHis nature, they are yet distinct from it. But, as St Cyril and other fathers teach at length, if the natural attributes ofGod are identified with the nature, then the Divinity is composite. Read through the writings against Eunomios bySt Basil the Great and his brother, St Gregory of Nyssa, who fraternally shares his views. There you will find clearlythat the followers of Barlaam and Akindynos are in agreement with Eunomios, and you will have ample refutationsto use against them.

125. The Eunomians asserted that the Father and the Son did not have the same essence, and they came to thisconclusion because they imagined that everything predicated of God is said with regard to His essence; and so theycontentiously argued that because to beget and to be begotten are different, on this account there are also differentessences. The Akindynists assert that it cannot be one and the same God who possesses both a divine essence anddivine energy, because they imagine that everything predicated of God is essence; and so they contentiously arguethat, if there is any difference between divine essence and energy, there are also many different gods. To refute bothgroups it is enough to show that not everything predicated of God is said with regard to His essence; it can be saidrelatively, that is, with relation to something that is not God's essence. For example, the Father is spoken of inrelation to the Son, for the Son is not the Father. And God is called Lord in relation to the subject creation, for Godis Lord over beings that are in time and in the eternal age, and also Lord over the ages themselves. But this dominionis an uncreated energy of God, distinct from His essence in that it is said in relation to something else, somethingwhich He Himself is not

126. The Eunomians maintain that everything that is attributed to God is essence. In this way they conclude thatunbegottenness is God's essence, thus degrading - so far as they can - the Son to the rank of a creature because Hediffers from the Father. Their purpose, they claim, is to avoid positing two

Gods; the first, unbegotten, and the onewho comes second after Him, begotten. In imitation of the Eunomians, the Akindynists maintain that everything thatis attributed to God is

essence, and in this way they impiously degrade God's energy to the rank of creature - the energy that althoughinseparable from God nevertheless differs from His essence in that it originates from the essence and is participatedin by created things; for, as St Dionysios says, 'AH things participate in the providence that wells forth from theGodhead, the Cause of all.' Their purpose, the Akindynists claim, is to avoid positing two Godheads: one, the tri-hypostatic essence that transcends name, cause, and participation; and the other, God's energy that proceeds from theessence, is participated in, and is named. They do not comprehend that, just as God the Father is called Father inrelation to His own Son and fatherhood pertains to Him as an uncreated property, even though the name 'Father'does not betoken the essence, so likewise God possesses energy uncreatedly, even though energy differs fromessence. When we speak of one Godhead, we speak of everything that God is, namely, both essence and energy.

Consequently the Akindynists are the ones who impiously split God's single divinity into created and uncreated.

127. An accident is that which comes into existence and passes out of existence, and in this way we can conceiveof inseparable attributes as well. From one point of view, a natural attribute is also an accident, since it increases anddecreases, as, for instance, knowledge in the soul endowed with intelligence. But there is no such thing in Godbecause He remains entirely changeless. For this reason nothing can be attributed to Him that is an accident. Yet notall things said of God betoken His essence. For what belongs to the category of relation is also predicated of Him,and this is relative and refers to relationship with something else, and does not signify essence. Such is the divineenergy in God. For it is not essence, nor an accident, even though it is called a kind of accident by some theologians,who mean to say simply this, that it is in God and that it is not

essence.

128. St Gregory of Nazianzos, when writing about the Holy Spirit, teaches us that, even though the divine energyis as it were also an accident, it is still seen to be m God without thereby making God composite. For he says, 'TheHoly Spirit must either be ranked among beings that are self-existent or among those that are seen to be in another.Those skilled in such matters call the former essence and the latter accident. If the Holy Spirit were an accident. Hewould be an

energy of God. For what else, or of whom else, could He be? And this avoids making God composite.' He isclearly saying that if the Spirit is one of the things seen to be in God, and so is not essence, but is an accident and iscalled Spirit, He cannot be anything other than God's energy. This he indicated by saying, 'For what else, or ofwhom else, could He be?' In order to make it clear also that apart from energy nothing else - not quality, or quantity,or anything else of this kind - can be seen to be in God, he adds, 'And this avoids making God composite.' But howdoes the energy, though it is seen to be in God, not introduce composition into God? Because only God possessescompletely impassible energy: He alone acts without being acted upon. He does not come into existence, nor doesHe change.

129. Slightly before this, in contrasting this energy with what is created, St Gregory also shows that he regarded itas uncreated. For he says, 'Of the wise men among ourselves, some have supposed the Spirit to be an energy, othersa created thing, and still others God.' By 'God' here he means the actual hypostasis; and by distinguishing the energyfrom what is created he clearly demonstrates that it is not created. Shortly afterwards he calls the energy an activityof God. How could God's activity not be uncreated? St John of Damaskos writes on this question: 'The energy is thedynamic and essential activity of the nature. That which possesses the capacity to energize is the nature from whichthe energy proceeds. That which is energized is the effect of the energy. That which energizes is what uses theenergy, that is to say, the hypostasis.'

130. In the same work St Gregory also says, 'If He is energy, then He will be energized but will not energize; andHe will cease to exist once He has been energized.' From this the followers of Akmdynos conclude and declare thatthe divine energy is created. They do not understand that being energized can also be said of uncreated realities, as

St Gregory shows when he says that if 'Father' is the name of an energy, 'then what the Father energizes will be theconsubstantiality of the Son'. And St John of Damaskos also says, 'Christ sat at the right

hand of God, divinely energizing universal providence" Yet neither does the expression 'He rested' call inquestion the uncreated nature of the energy. For in creating God begins and ceases: as Moses says, 'God rested fromall the works that He had begun to make' (Gen. 2:1). But the act of creating itself, with respect to which God beginsand ceases, is a natural and uncreated energy of God.

131. After saying, 'The energy is the dynamic and essential activity of the nature', St John of Damaskos seeks todemonstrate that, according to St Gregory of Nazianzos, this energy is both actuated and ceases to act. For he adds,'We should realize that the energy is an activity and is energized rather than energizes. As St Gregory theTheologian says in his homily on the Holy Spirit, "If He is energy, then He will be energized but will not energize;and He will cease to exist once He has been energized".' Thus it is obvious that those who share the views ofBarlaam and Akindynos, and who teach that the energy of which St Gregory here speaks is created, mindlesslydegrade to the rank of a creature God's natural and essential energy. Yet St John of Damaskos, when he affirms thatthis energy is not only energized but also energizes, shows thereby that it is uncreated. That in this St John does notdisagree with St Gregory I have made abundantly clear in my longer works.

132. In God the hypostatic properties are affirmed relatively one to the other. The hypostases differ from eachother, but not with respect to essence. Sometimes God is also referred to in relation to creation. Yet God, the All-Holy

Trinity, cannot be called Father in the same way that He is called pre-etemal, pre-unoriginate, great and good.For it is not each of the three hypostases that is the Father, but only one of them, from whom and to whomsubsequent realities are referred. None the less, in relation to creation the Trinity can also be called the Father,because creation is the joint work of the Three, brought forth from absolute nothingness, and because our adoptionas sons is achieved through the bestowal of the grace common to the Three. The scriptural texts, 'The Lord your Godis one Lord' (cf. Deut. 6:4) and 'One is our Father in heaven' (cf. Matt. 6:9; 23:9), refer to the Holy Trinity as our oneLord and God, and also as our Father who

through His grace confers on us a new birth. As we said, the Father is called Father only in relation to His

coessential Son. In relation to both Son and Spirit He is called Principle, as He is also called Principle in relation tocreation, but here in the sense that He is the Creator and Master of all creatures. Thus when the Father is called suchthings in relation to creation, the Son is also Principle, though they constitute not two Principles but one. For the Sonis called Principle in relation to creation, as He is likewise called Master in relation to the created things subject toHim. Thus the Father and the Son, together with the Spirit, are - in relation to creation - one Principle, one Master,one Creator, one God and Father, one Provider and Overseer, and so on. Yet none of these properties constitute theessence, for if it was the essence it could not have been spoken of in relation to another.

133. States, conditions, places, times, and any other such thing are not literally but metaphorically predicated ofGod. But to create and to energize can in the truest sense be predicated of God alone; for only God creates. He doesnot come into existence nor with respect to His essence is He acted upon. He alone through all things creates eachone. He alone creates from absolute nothingness, since He possesses energy that is all-powerful. With respect to thisenergy He can be referred to in relation to creation and possesses potentiality. For He Himself

in His own nature isnot capable of being affected by anything at all, but if He wishes He is capable of adding to His creations. For Godin His essence to be capable of being affected, of possessing or acquiring something, would denote weakness. Butfor God through His energy to be capable of creating, and of possessing and adding to His creations whenever Hewishes, is a token of divinely fitting and almighty power.

134. All existent things can be grouped into ten categories, namely, essence, quantity, quality, relation, place,time, activity, passivity, possession and dependence; and these ten categories apply likewise to everythingsubsequently seen to pertain to essence. But God is supra-essential essence, in which can be seen only relation andactivity or creation, and these two things do not produce in His essence any composition or change. For God createsall things without being affected in His essence. He is Creator in relation to creation, and also its Principle andMaster in that it has its origin in Him and is dependent on Him. But He is also our Father, since by grace He conferson us rebirth. Yet He is Father, too, in relation to the Son who is completely without any temporal beginning. TheSon is Son in relation to the

Father, while the Spirit is the projection of the Father, coetemal with the Father and the Son, being of one and thesame essence. Those who assert that God is only essence, with nothing to be seen in Him, fabricate a God who hasneither creativity and energy nor relation. But if He whom they suppose to be God does not possess these properties,then He is neither active nor Creator, nor does He possess an energy; and neither is He Principle, Creator andMaster, nor is He our Father by grace. For how could He be these things if relation and creativity are not to beenvisaged in His essence? Furthermore, if relation is not to be envisaged in God's essence, the tri-hypostaticcharacter of the Godhead is also abolished. But He who is not tn-hypostatic is not the Master of all or God. Thusthose who hold the views of Barlaam and Akmdynos are atheists.

135. God also possesses that which is not essence. Yet because it is not essence it

is not on that account an

accident. For that which not only does not pass away but which also neither admits nor induces in itself the slightestincrease or decrease, cannot be included among accidents. But the fact that it is neither an accident nor essence doesnot mean that it has no existence: it exists and it truly exists. It is not an accident, because it is altogether changeless.But again it is not an essence, because it is not among those things that are self-subsistent. It is because of this thatsome theologians say that it is in a certain way an accident, by which they wish only to indicate that it is not essence.But because each hypostatic property and each of the hypostases is neither an essence nor an accident in God, is iton this account totally nonexistent? Certainly not. In the same way, then. God's divine energy is neither an essencenor an accident, nor is it something utterly nonexistent. To speak in accord with all the theologians: if God createsby will and not simply because it is His nature to do so, then to will is one thing and natural being is another. If thisis so, it means that God's volition is other than the divine essence. Does it follow from this that because in God thewill is other than the nature and is not an essence it therefore does not exist at all? Certainly not: it does exist and itpertains to God, who possesses not only essence but also a will with which He creates. One may if one wishes saythat it is in a certain way an accident, since it is not an essence; yet neither is it in the strict sense an accident, since itdoes not produce any composition or alteration. Thus God possesses both essence and that which is not essence,even if it should not be called an accident, namely, the divine will and energy.

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136. Unless an essence has an energy distinct from itself, it will entirely lack actual existence and will be a meremental concept. For man as a general concept does not think, does not have opinions, does not see, does not smell,does not speak, does not hear, does not walk, does not breathe, does not eat and, in short, does not have an energywhich is distinct from his essence, and which shows that he possesses an individual state of being. Thus man as ageneral concept entirely lacks actual existence. But when man possesses an inherent energy distinct from

hisessence, whether it be one or many or all of those activities we have mentioned, it is known thereby that hepossesses an individual state of being and does not lack actual existence. And because these energies are observednot only in one or two or three but in a great number of individuals, it is clear that man exists in countless individualstates of being.

137. According to the true faith of God's Church which by His grace we hold, God possesses inherent energy thatmakes Him manifest and is in this respect distinct from His essence. For He foreknows and provides for inferiorbeings; He creates, sustains, rules and transforms them according to His own will and knowledge. In this way it isclear that He possesses an individual state of being, and that He is not simply essence lacking actual existence. Butsince all these energies are to be seen not in one but in three Persons, God is known to us as one essence existing inthree individual states of being or hypostases. But the followers of Akmdynos, by asserting that God does not haveinherent energy that makes Him manifest and is in this respect distinct from His essence, are saying that God doesnot possess an individual state of being, and they entirely deprive the tri-hypostatic Lord of actual existence. In thisway they excel Sabellius the Libyan in heresy; for their total impiety is worse than his corrupt piety.

138. The energy of the three divine hypostases is one not in the sense that each has an energy similar to that of theothers, as is the case with us, but in the sense of true numerical unity. This is something which those who hold theviews of Akmdynos are unable to accept. For they say that there is no common, uncreated energy pertaining to thethree hypostases and that the hypostases are energies of one another, since according to them there is no commondivine energy. Thus they are unable to affirm that the three hypostases possess a single energy, and by excludingnow one, now another energy they again deprive the tri-hypostatic God of actual existence.

139. Because those diseased in soul with Akmdynos's delusions say that the energy that is distinct from God'sessence is created, they conclude that God's

creative power is created. For it is impossible to act and create withoutan energy, just as it is impossible to exist without existence. Therefore, just as one cannot say that God's existence iscreated and at the same trnie affirm that His being is uncreated, so also one cannot say that God's energy is createdand at the same time affirm that His power to act and create is uncreated.

140. According to those who hold the true faith - and contrary to Akindynos's nonsensical and impious ramblings- created things are not the energy of God, but they are the effects of the divine energy. For if the created things arethe energy, either such things are uncreated - which is sheer folly, for it would mean that they exist before they arecreated - or else prior to created things God possesses no energy; and this is mere godlessness. For of course God iseternally active and all-powerful. Thus creatures are not God's energy, but things that (whatever the preciseterminology employed) have been actualized and effected. But God's energy, according to the theologians, isuncreated and coetemal with God.

141. The energy is not known from the essence; but we do know from the energy that the essence exists, thoughwe do not know what it is. Thus according to the theologians God's existence is known from His providence, notfrom His essence. Such, then, is the way in which energy can be distinguished from essence: the energy is thatwhich makes known, while the essence is that whose existence is made known by the energy. The advocates ofAkindynos's impiety,, in their anxiety to persuade us that the divine energy in no way differs from the divineessence, abolish that which makes God known, and so end up by trying to convince us that we cannot know thatGod exists - since they at any rate have no knowledge of Him. But he who does not even know that God exists willbe the most godless and stupid of men.

142. When the Akmdymsts say that, although God possesses an energy, it does not in any way differ from Hisessence, they attempt thus to cloak their own impiety and sophistically to mislead and deceive their hearers.Sabellius the Libyan likewise said that God the Father has a Son who differs in no way from the Father. But just ashe was guilty of teaching that the Father is without a Son, since he denied their hypostatic distinction, so now thesepeople are guilty of holding that God has no energy whatsoever, since they assert that the divine

energy in no way differs from the divine essence. If, indeed, there were no difference between these two, Godwould possess no capacity for creating and actuating, for according to the theologians it is impossible to act withoutan energy, just as it is impossible to exist without existence. For those who think rightly, there is also another factwhich indicates that there is a difference between the divme energy and the divine essence. The energy actuatessomething else, not identical with the one who acts. God actuates and makes created things, but He Himself isuncreated. Further, a relationship is always affirmed in relation to something else: son is spoken of in relation tofather, but a son is never father of his father. Therefore, as it is impossible for the relationship not to differ in anyway from the essence and for it to be itself the essence instead of being in the essence, so likewise it is impossiblefor the energy not to differ from the essence but to be the essence, even though this may give offence to Akindynos.

143. St Basil the Great, when he writes of God in his Syllogistic Chapters, says, 'The energy is neither the onewho energizes nor that which is energized. Therefore the energy is not to be confused with the essence." St Cyrillikewise affirms concerning God: To create pertains to energy, to beget pertains to nature. But nature and energy arenot identical' And St John of Damaskos writes, 'Generation is an operation of the divine nature, but the creation isan operation of the divine will.' And elsewhere he says clearly, 'Energy is one thing and that which has the capacityto energize is another. For energy is the essential activity of the nature. That which possesses the capacity toenergize is the nature from which the energy proceeds.' The energy, then, according to the holy fathers, differs inmany ways from the divine essence.

144. God's essence is entirely unnamable since it is also completely incomprehensible. Therefore we name it onthe basis of all its energies, although with respect to the essence itself none of those names means anything differentfrom any other. For by each name and by all names together nothing other is named except that which is hidden andwhose real identity is unknown to all. But with respect to the energies.

each of these names has a different significance, for we all know that the acts of creating, ruling, judging,providential guidance, and of God's adopting us as sons through His grace, are acts that differ from one another.Thus when the Akindynists say that these natural, divine energies are created because they differ both from oneanother and from the divine nature, what else are they doing except degrading God and making Him a creature? Forthings that are created, ruled, judged and so on, are creatures and not the Creator, the Ruler, and the judge. And thesame can be said of the acts of judging, ruling, and creating, which are acts that by nature pertain to God.

145. Just as the essence of God is altogether without name because according to the theologians it transcends allnames, so it is also miparticipable in that according to them it transcends participation. Thus those who in our daydisbelieve the teaching of the Spirit given through our holy fathers and who revile us when we agree with thefathers, say that if the divine energy differs from the divine essence, even though it is envisaged as wholly pertainingto God's essence, then either there will be many gods or the one God will be composite. They are unaware that it isnot activating and energy but being acted upon and passivity that produce composition. God activates without in anyway being acted upon or subject to change. Thus He is not composite on account of His energy. Furthermore, Godalso possesses relationship and is related to creation, as being its Principle and Master; but He is not on this accountnumbered among things that have come into existence. And how will there be many gods because of God possessingan energy, since the energy pertains to one God or, rather, since God Himself is both the divine essence, and thedivine energy? All this is clearly folly deriving from a demented state of mind.

146. The Lord said to His disciples, 'There are some standing here who will not taste death till they have seen thekingdom of God come with power' (Mark 9:1); and after six days He took Peter, James and John, and when they hadascended Mount Tabor He shone like the sun, and His clothes became white as light (cf Matt. 17:1-2). When thedisciples could look at it no longer or, rather, because they lacked the strength to gaze at the brightness, they fellprostrate to the earth

(cf. Matt. 17:6). None the less, in accordance with the Savior's promise they did see thekingdom of God, that divine and inexpressible light. St Gregory of Nazianzos and, St Basil call this light 'divinity',saying that 'the light is the divinity manifested to the disciples on the

Mount', and that it is 'the beauty of Him who is almighty, and His noetic and contemplatable divinity'. St Basil theGreat also says that this light is the beauty of God contemplated by the saints alone in the power of the divine Spirit;and again he writes, 'On the mountain Peter and the sons of thunder saw His beauty shining more brightly than thesun; and they were privileged to receive with their eyes a foretaste of His advent.' St John of Damaskos as well as StJohn Chrysostom call that light a natural ray of the Divinity. The former writes, 'Because the Son was begottenunoriginately from the Father, He possesses the natural, unongmate ray of the Divinity; and the glory of the Divinitybecomes the glory of His body.' And St John Chrysostom says, 'The Lord appeared upon the mountain more radiantthan Himself because the Divinity revealed its rays.'

147. This divine and inexpressible light. God's divinity and kingdom, the beauty and resplendence of the divinenature, the vision and delight of the saints in the age without end, the natural ray and glory of the Divinity - this thefollowers of Akindynos call an apparition and a creature. Further, they slanderously call ditheists those who refuseto blaspheme as they do against the divine light and who affirm God to be uncreated both in His essence and in Hisenergy. But they should be ashamed, for though the divine light is uncreated, there is for us one God in one divinity,since, as has been shown above in many different ways, both the uncreated essence and the uncreated energy - thatis, this divine grace and illumination - pertain to one God.

148. Because the followers of Akindynos at the Synod audaciously asserted and strove to demonstrate that thedivine light that shone from the Savior on Tabor was an apparition and a creature, and because they did not changetheir views although they were frequently confuted, they were placed under a writ of

excommunication andanathema. For they blaspheme God's economy in the flesh, and

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mindlessly say that God's divinity is created; and in this way-since the divinity of the three Persons is one and thesame - they degrade the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit themselves to the rank of a creature. And when theyclaim to worship an uncreated divinity, they plainly profess that there are two divinities in God, the one created andthe other uncreated. In this manner they strive to surpass in impiety all the ancient heretics.

149. At other times these people contrive to conceal their heresy by saying that the light that shone on Tabor isboth uncreated and also the essence of God, and in this they blaspheme in many ways. For since that light was seenby the apostles, these people perversely imagine that the essence of God is visible. Let them listen to him who says,'No one has been in such a position as to see or disclose the essence and nature of God.' Not only men but also theangels are unable to do so; for even the six-winged Cherubim cover their faces with their wings because of thesurpassing brilliance of the illumination shining from the divine essence (cf. Isa. 6:2). God's supraessentiality hasnever appeared to anyone at any time. Thus when the followers of Akindynos identify it with the light of theTransfiguration, what they are asserting is that this light is entirely invisible, that not even the chosen apostles wereable to see it on Mount Tabor, that the Lord did not truthfully promise them the sight of it, and that he who said, 'Wesaw His glory when we were with Him in the holy mount' (cf. John 1: 14; 2 Pet. 1:18), and 'Peter and those with himstayed awake and saw His glory' (cf. Luke 9:32), did not speak the truth; nor did that other who says that Christ'sespecially beloved disciple 'saw disclosed upon the mountain the actual divinity of the Logos'. Thus they saw, theytruly saw that uncreated and divine effulgence, while God yet continued invisible in His supraessential hiddenness,although Barlaam and Akmdynos and their followers may explode with indignation at this.

150. Whenever one asks the Akindynists who say that the light of the Divinity is the essence: 'Is, then, theessence of God visible?', they are forced to unmask their treachery. For they assert that this light is the essence, sincethrough it the essence of God is manifest; thus God's essence can be seen by means of created things. So once againthese

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wretches assert that the hght of the Lord's Transfiguration is a created thing. Yet that which is seen throughcreated things is not God's essence but His creative energy. Therefore those who say that by means of creaturesGod's essence is seen speak irrehgiously and in agreement with Eunomios, so prohfic is the crop of their impiety.Thus we should shun them and their company, for their teaching is a soul-destroying and many-headed serpent,corrupting the tme faith in a multitude of ways.

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St Gregory PalamasThe Declaration of the Holy Mountain in Defense of Those who Devoutly Practice

A Life of Stillness

(Prologue) The mysteries of the Mosaic law, once foreseen in the Spirit by the prophets alone, have now becomedoctrines known to all alike and openly proclaimed. Similarly the way of life according to the Gospel has also itsown mysteries; and these are the blessings of the age to come which are promised to the saints, and which are nowdisclosed prophetically to those whom the Spirit accounts worthy, but only to a limited extent and as a pledge and aforetaste. If one of the Jews of old, lacking a proper spirit of reverence, were to hear the prophets proclaiming theLogos and the Spirit of God to be pre-etemal and coetemal with God, he might have stopped up his ears, supposingthat he heard things forbidden to piety and opposed to what was openly confessed by true believers, namely. TheLord your God is one Lord' (cf Deut. 6:4). Similarly a person today who without proper reverence hears of themysteries of the Spirit

that are known only by those who have been purified through virtue might react in the sameway. Agam, the fulfillment of the prophecies in the Old Testament showed the mysteries of that time to beconcordant with what was later made manifest, so that now we believe in Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the tri-hypostatic Godhead, one simple, non-composite, uncreated, unseen, incomprehensible nature. Similarly, when in itsown time the age to come is revealed according to the ineffable manifestation of the one God in three perfecthypostases, it will be clear that the present mysteries accord with all that is then made manifest.

Yet we must also take into account the fact that, although the tri-hypostatic nature of the Godhead - that is in noway destroyed by the

principle of unity - was in later times revealed to the ends of the earth, it was also fully known to the prophetsprior to the fulfillment of the things prophesied and was readily accepted by those who trusted in them. In the samemanner, even at this present time we are not ignorant of the doctrines of the Christian confession, both those whichare openly proclaimed and those which are mystically and prophetically revealed by the Spirit to such as areaccounted worthy. These are persons who have been initiated by actual experience, who have renouncedpossessions, human glory and the ugly pleasures of the body for the sake of the evangelical life; and not only this,but they have also: strengthened their renunciation by submitting themselves to those who have attained spiritualmaturity in Christ. Through the practice of the life of stillness they devote their attention undistractedly tothemselves and to God, and by transcending themselves through sincere prayer and by establishing themselves in

God through their mystical and supra-intellectual union with Him they have been initiated into what surpasses theintellect. Others again have learnt about these things through their reverence, faith and love for such persons.

When, therefore, we hear the great Dionysios in his second epistle to Gaios

referring to God's deifying gift as'divinity and the source of divinity and goodness', we conclude that the God who grants this grace to those worthy toreceive it surpasses this divinity; for God does not suffer multiplicity, nor can we speak thus of two divinities. AndSt, Maximos, when speaking about Melchisedec, writes that this deifying grace of God is 'uncreated', declaring it tobe 'eternally existent, proceeding from the eternally existing God', and elsewhere in many places he says it is a light,ungenerated and completely real, that is manifested to the saints when they become worthy of receiving it, though itdoes not come into being merely at that moment. He also calls this light 'the light of utterly inexpressible glory andthe purity of angels'; while St Makarios calls it the nourishment of the bodiless, the glory of the divine nature, thebeauty of the age to come, divine and celestial fire, inexpressible noetic light, foretaste and pledge of the Holy Spirit,the sanctifying oil of gladness.'

' Cf. St Symeon Metaphrastis, Paraphrase of the Homilies of St Makarios, §§62, 70, 73, 74; E.T., The Philokalia,vol. hi, pp. 312,315,317-18.

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1. If, then, anyone condemns as Messalians those who declare this deifying grace of God to be uncreated,ungenerated and completely real, and calls them ditheists, he must know - if indeed there is such a person - that he isan adversary of the saints of God, and that if he does not repent he excludes himself from the inheritance of theredeemed and falls away from Him who by nature is the one and only God professed by the saints. But if anyonebelieves, is persuaded by and concurs with the saints and does not 'make excuses to justify sin' (Ps. 141:4. LXX),and if although ignorant of the manner of the mystery he does not because of his ignorance reject what is clearlyproclaimed, let him not refuse to enquire and learn from those who do possess knowledge. For he will find that thereis nothing inconsistent either in the divine words and acts, especially with respect to those things that are mostessential and without which nothing can stand firm, or in the sound doctrine that concerns ourselves, or in themystery that is altogether divine.

2. If anyone declares that perfect union with God is accomplished simply in an imitative and relative fashion,without the deifying grace of the Spirit and merely in the manner of persons who share the same disposition andwho love one another, and that the deifying grace of God is a state of our intellectual nature acquired by imitationalone, but is not a supernatural illumination and an ineffable and divine energy beheld invisibly and conceivedinconceivably by those privileged to participate in it, then he must know that he has fallen unawares into thedelusion of the Messalians. For if deification is accomplished according to a capacity inherent in human nature andif it is encompassed within the bounds of nature, then of necessity the person deified is by nature God. Whoeverthinks like this should not attempt, therefore, to foist his own delusion upon those who stand on secure ground andto impose a defiled creed upon those whose faith is undefiled; rather he should lay aside his presumption and learn

from persons of experience or from their disciples that the grace of deification is entirely unconditional, and there isno faculty whatever in nature capable of achieving it since, if there were, this grace would no longer be grace butmerely the manifestation of the operation of a natural capacity. Nor, if deification were in accord with a naturalcapacity, would there be anything miraculous in it; for then deification would truly be the work of nature, not thegift of God, and a man would be able to be and to be called a God by nature in the full sense of

the words. For the natural capacity of every being is nothing other than the undeviating and natural disposition foractive accomplishment. It is, indeed, incomprehensible how deification can raise the person deified outside orbeyond himself if it is encompassed within the bounds of nature.

The grace of deification is, therefore, above nature, virtue and knowledge and, according to St Maximos, all suchthings infinitely fall short of it. For all the virtue we can attain and such imitation of God as lies in our power doesno more than fit us for union with the Deity, but it is through grace that this ineffable union is actually accom-plished. Through grace God in His entirety penetrates

the saints in their entirety, and the saints in their entiretypenetrate God entirely, exchanging the whole of Him for themselves, and acquiring Him alone as the reward of theirascent towards Him; for He embraces them as the soul embraces the body, enabling them to be in Him as His ownmembers.

3. If anyone asserts that those who regard the intellect as seated in the heart or in the head are Messalians, let himknow that he is misguidedly attacking the saints. For St Athanasios the Great says that the soul's intelligence residesin the head, and St Makarios, who is in no way inferior, says that the intellect is active in the heart; and nearly all thesaints concur with them. When St Gregory of Nyssa writes that the intellect is neither within the body nor outside itfor it is bodiless, this does not contradict what all these other saints affirm; for they say that the intellect is in thebody because it is united to it, and thus they state the same thing in a different fashion, not in the least disagreeingwith St Gregory. For if someone says that the Logos of God once dwelt within a virginal and immaculate womb, outof ineffable divine compassion united there to our human substance, he does not contradict someone who maintainsthat whatever is divine is not contained within a place because it is unembodied.

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4. If anyone maintains that the light which shone about the disciples on Mount Tabor was an apparition and asymbol of the kind that now is and now is not, but has no real being and is an effect that not only does not surpass

comprehension, but is inferior to it, he clearly contends against the doctrines of the saints. For the saints both inhymns and in their writings call this light ineffable, uncreated, eternal, timeless, unapproachable, boundless, infinite,limitless, invisible to angels and men, archetypal and unchanging beauty, the glory of God, the glory of Christ, theglory of the Spirit, the ray of Divinity and so forth. The flesh of Christ, it is said, is glorified at the moment of itsassumption and the glory of the Godhead becomes the body's glory. But this glory was invisible in His visible bodyto those unable to perceive that upon which even angels cannot gaze. Thus Christ was transfigured, not by theaddition

of something He was not, nor by a transformation into something He was not, but by the manifestation toHis disciples of what He really was. He opened their eyes so that instead of being blind they could see. While HeHimself remained the same, they could now see Him as other than He had appeared to them formerly. For He is 'thetrue light' (John 1:9), the beauty of divine glory, and He shone forth like the sun - though this image is imperfect,since what is uncreated cannot be imaged in creation without some diminution.

5. If anyone maintains that only God's essence is uncreated, while His eternal energies are not uncreated, and thatas what energizes transcends all it activates, so God transcends all His energies, let him listen to St Maximos, whosays: 'AH immortal things and immortality itself, all living things and life itself, all holy things and holiness itself, allgood things and goodness itself, all blessings and blessedness itself, all beings and being itself are manifestly worksof God. Some began to be in time, for they have not always existed. Others did not begin to be in time, for goodness,blessedness, holiness and immortality have always existed." And again he says: 'Goodness, and all that is includedin the principle of goodness, and - to be brief - all life, immortality, simplicity, immutability and infinity, and all theother qualities that

' Texts on Theology i, 50: E.T., The Philokalia, vol. ii, p. 124.

contemplative vision perceives as substantively appertaining to God, are realities of God which did not begin tobe in time. For non-existence is never prior to goodness, nor to any of the other things we have listed, even if thosethings which participate in them do in themselves have a beginning in time. All goodness is without beginningbecause there is no time prior to it: God is eternally the unique author of its being, and God is infinitely above allbeings, whether participant or participable." It is clear, therefore, from what has been said that not everything whichissues from God is subject to time. For there are some things issuing from God that are without beginning, withoutthis in the least impairing the principle of the Triadic Unity, that alone is intrinsically without

beginning, or God'ssupraessential simplicity. In the same way the intellect, which is the imperfect image of that transcendentindivisibility, is not in the least compound because of the variety of its inherent intellections.

6. If anyone does not acknowledge that spiritual dispositions are stamped upon the body as a consequence of thegifts of the Spirit that exist in the soul of those advancing on the spiritual path; and if he does not regard dispassionas a state of aspiration for higher things that leads a person to free himself from evil habits by completely spumingwhat is evil and to acquire good habits by espousing what is good, but considers it to be the deathlike condition ofthe soul's passible aspect, then, by adhering to such views, he inevitably denies that we can enjoy an embodied life

in the world of incorruption that is to come. For if in the age to come the body is to share with the soul in ineffableblessings, then it is evident that in this world as well it will also share according to its capacity in the gracemystically and ineffably bestowed by God upon the purified intellect, and it will experience the divine in conformitywith its nature. For once the soul's passible aspect is transformed and sanctified - but not reduced to a deathlikecondition - through it the dispositions and activities of the body are also sanctified, since body and soul share aconjoint existence. As St Diadochos states, in the case of those who have abandoned the delights of this age in thehope of enjoying the blessings of eternity, the intellect, because of its freedom from worldly cares, is able to act withits full vigor and becomes capable of perceiving the ineffable goodness of God. Then according to the measure of itsown progress it

^ Op. cit, 1,48-9; E.T., pp. 123-4.

communicates its joy to the body too, and this joy which then fills both soul and body is a true recalling ofincorruptible life.'

The intellect perceives one light, and the senses another. The senses perceive sensible light, which manifestssensory things as sensory. The light of the

intellect is the spiritual knowledge inherent in intellection. Thus sight andintellect do not perceive the same light, but each operates to the limit of its nature in what is natural to it. Whensaintly people become the happy possessors of spiritual and supernatural grace and power, they see both with thesense of sight and with the intellect that which surpasses both sense and intellect in the manner that - to use theexpression of St Gregory of Nazianzos - 'God alone knows and those in whom these things are brought to pass'.

7. These things we have been taught by the Scriptures and have received from our fathers; and we have come toknow them from our own small experience. Having seen them set down in the treatise of our brother, the mostreverend Hieromonk Gregory, In Defense of Those who Devoutly Practice a Life of Stillness, and acknowledgingthem to be fully consistent with the traditions of the saints, we have adjoined our signature for the assurance of thosewho read this present document.

♦ The Protos of the venerable monasteries on the Holy Mountain, Hieromonk Isaac.

♦ The abbot of the venerable, imperial and sacred Lavra, Theodosios Hieromonk.

♦♦♦ The signature of the abbot of the monastery of Iviron in his own language \in Georgian^.

♦ The abbot of the venerable and imperial monastery of Vatopedi,♦♦♦ Hieromonk loanmkios.

♦♦♦ The signature of the abbot of the monastery of the Serbs in his own language \in Slavonic]^♦♦♦ I, Philotheos, the least of hieromonks, being of the same mind, have undersigned.

♦ Amphilochios, the least of hieromonks and the spiritual father of the venerable monastery of Esphigmenou.

♦ I, Gerasimos, the lowly hieromonk, having seen and read what has here been written with love for the trath,and having assented thereto, have undersigned.

' Cf. On Spiritual Knowledge 25: ed. des Places, p. 97; E.T.. The Philokalia, vol. i, p. 259.

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♦ I, Moses, the lowly elder and least of monks, being of the same mind, have undersigned.

♦ Theodosios, the least of hieromonks and the spiritual father of Vatopedi.

♦ The abbot of the sacred monastery of Koutloumousiou, Theostiriktos Hieromonk.

♦ I, Gerontios of Maroula, the sinner, one of the council of elders of the venerable Lavra, being of the samemind, have undersigned.

X Kallistos of Mouzalon, the least of monks.

♦ I, the lowly and least of monks, Gregory of Stravolangado, and perhaps a hesychast, being of the samemind and opinion, have undersigned.

♦ I, the elder from the Skete of Magoula and least of hieromonks, Isaias, being of the same mind, haveundersigned.

♦ Mark of Sinai, the least of monks.

♦ Kallistos of the Skete of Magoula and least of hieromonks.

♦ The signature of an elder and hesychast from Syria in his own language \in Arabic].*X* Sophromos, the least of monks.

♦ loasaph, the least of monks.

♦ I, lakovos, the humble bishop of Hierissos and the Holy Mountain, who was reared on the traditions of theHoly Mountain and the fathers, testify that by the signatures of these select men the entire Holy Mountainhas undersigned with one accord, and I myself, assenting to these things and putting my seal thereto, haveundersigned. I add, furthermore, together with all the rest, that we shall have

no communion with anyonewho is not in agreement with the saints, as we are, and as were the fathers who immediately preceded us.

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Glossary

AGE (aicbv - aeon): the ensemble of cosmic duration. It includes the angelic orders, and is an attribute of God as

the principle and consummation of all the centuries created by Him. The term is used more particularly in twoways:

(i) Frequently a distinction is made between the 'present age' and the 'age to come' or the 'new age'. The firstcorresponds to our present sense of time, the second to time as it exists in God, that is, to eternity understood, notas endless time, but as the simultaneous presence of all time. Our present sense of time, according to which weexperience time as sundered from God, is the consequence of the loss of vision and spiritual perceptionoccasioned by the fall and is on this account more or less illusory. In reality time is not and never can besundered from God, the 'present age' from the 'age to come'. Because of this the 'age to come' and its realitiesmust be thought of, not as non-existent or as coming into existence in the future, but as actualities that by gracewe can experience here and now. To indicate this, the Greek phrase for these realities (e , - ta

mellonta) is often translated as 'the blessings held in store'.

(ii) Certain texts, especially in St Maximos the Confessor, also use the term aeon in a connected but morespecific way, to denote a level intermediate between eternity in the full sense (aiSldTrjg - aidiotis) and time asknown to us in our present experience (m g - chronos). Where this is the case we normally employ therendering 'aeon' instead of 'age'. There are thus three levels:

(a) eternity, the totum simiil or simultaneous presence of all time and reality as known to God, who alone hasneither origin nor end, and who therefore is alone eternal in the full sense;

(b) the aeon, the totiim simul as known to the angels, and also to human persons who possess experience ofthe 'age to come':

although having no end, these angelic or human beings, since they are created, are not self-originating andtherefore are not eternal in the sense that God is eternal;

(c) time, that is, temporal succession as known to us in the 'present age'.

APPETITIVE ASPECT OF THE soul, or the soul's desiring power {to smOvfirjiiKov- to epithymitikon): one of thethree aspects or powers of the soul according to the tripartite division formulated by Plato (see his Republic,Book iv, 4.34D-441C) and on the whole accepted by the Greek Christian Fathers. The other two are, first, theintelligent aspect or power (to Xoyiatixov - to logistikon: see Intelligent); and, second, the incensive aspect orpower (to OvfUKov - to thymikon), which often manifests itself as wrath or anger, but which can be moregenerally defined as the force provoking vehement feelings. The three aspects or powers can be used positively,that is, in accordance with nature and as created by God, or negatively, that is, in a way contrary to nature andleading to sin (q.v.). For instance, the incensive power can be used positively to repel demonic attacks or tointensify desire for God; but it can also, when not controlled, lead to self-indulgent, disruptive thought andaction.

The appetitive and incensive aspects, in particular the former, are sometimes termed the soul's passibleaspect (to KaOrjTiKov - to pathitikon), that is to say, the aspect which is more especially vulnerable to pathos orpassion (q.v.), and which, when not transformed by positive spiritual influences, is susceptive to the influenceof negative and self-destructive forces. The intelligent aspect, although also susceptible to passion, is notnormally regarded as part of the soul's passible aspect.

ASSENT (avyKardOecng - synkatathesis): see Temptation.

ATTENTIVENESS {jipoaox') -prosochi): see Watchfulness.

COMPUNCTION {Kardw^iQ - katanyxis): in our version sometimes also translated 'deep penitence'. The state ofone who is 'pricked to the heart', becoming conscious both of his own sinfulness and of the forgiveness extendedto him by God; a mingled feeling of sorrow, tenderness and joy,

springing from sincere repentance (q.v.).

CONCEPTUAL IMAGE {vorjua - noyma): see Thought.

CONTEMPLATION (Oecopia - theoria): the perception or vision of

the intellect (q.v.) through which one attains spiritual knowledge (q.v.). It may be contrasted with the practice ofthe virtues {npaKTiKrj - praktiki) which designates the more external aspect of the ascetic life - purification and thekeeping of the commandments - but which is an indispensable prerequisite of contemplation. Depending on thelevel of personal spiritual growth, contemplation has two main stages: it may be either of the inner essences orprinciples (q.v.) of created beings or, at a higher stage, of God Himself.

COUPLING {awdvaai^ioQ - syndyasmos): see Temptation.

DELUSION {jiXavrj - plani): see Illusion.

DESIRE, Desiring power of the soul: see Appetitive aspect of the soul.

DISCRIMINATION (diaKpiaiq - diakrisis): a spiritual gift permitting one to discriminate between the types ofthought that enter into one's mind, to assess them accurately and to treat them accordingly. Through this gift onegains 'discernment of spirits' - that is, the ability to distinguish between the thoughts or visions inspired by Godand the suggestions or fantasies coming from the devil. It is a kind of eye or lantern of the soul by which manfinds his way along the spiritual path without falling into extremes; thus it includes the idea of discretion.DISPASSION (anaQsia - apatheia): among the writers of the texts here translated, some regard passion (q.v.) asevil and the consequence of sin (q.v.), and for them dispassion signifies passionlessness, the uprooting of thepassions; others, such as St Isaiah the Solitary, regard the passions as fundamentally good, and for themdispassion signifies a state in which the passions are exercised in accordance with their original purity and sowithout committing sin in act or thought. Dispassion is a state of reintegration and spiritual freedom; whentranslating the term into Latin, Cassian rendered it 'purity of heart'. Such a state may imply impartiality anddetachment, but not

indifference, for if a dispassionate man does not suffer on his own account, he suffers for hisfellow creatures. It consists, not in ceasing to feel the attacks of the demons, but in no longer yielding to them. Itis positive, not negative: Evagrios links it closely with the quality of love (agape) and Diadochos speaks of the'fire of dispassion' (§ 17: in our translation, vol. i, p. 258). Dispassion is among the gifts of God.

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Glossary

ECSTASY {eKoraaiQ - ekstasis): a 'going out' from oneself and from all created things towards God, under theinfluence of eros or intense longing (q.v.). A man does not attain ecstasy by his own efforts, but is drawn out ofhimself by the power of God's love. Ecstasy implies a passing beyond all the conceptual thinking of thediscursive reason (q.v.). It may sometimes be marked by a state of trance, or by a loss of normal consciousness;but such psychophysical accompaniments are in no way essential. Occasionally the term ekstasis is used in a badsense, to mean infatuation, loss of self-control, or madness.

FAITH (jiariQ - pistis): not only an individual or theoretical belief in the dogmatic truths of Christianity, but an all-embracing relationship, an attitude of love and total trust in God. As such it involves a transformation of man'sentire life. Faith is a gift from God, the means whereby we are taken up into the whole theanthropic activity ofGod in Christ and of man in Christ through which man attains salvation.

FALLEN NATURE {naXaioQ dvOpmnoq -palaios anthropos): literally, the 'old man'. See Flesh, sense (ii).

FANTASY {(pavraaia -fantasia): denoting the image-producing faculty of the psyche, this is one of the mostimportant words in the hesychast vocabulary. As one begins to advance along the spiritual path one begins to'perceive' images of things which have no direct point of reference in the external world, and which emergeinexplicably from within oneself This experience is a sign that one's consciousness is beginning to deepen: outersensations and ordinary thoughts have to some extent been quietened, and the impulses, fears, hopes, passionshidden in the subconscious region are beginning to break through to the surface. One of the goals of the spirituallife is indeed the attainment of a spiritual

knowledge (q.v.) which transcends both the ordinary level ofconsciousness and the subconscious; and it is true that images, especially when the recipient is in an advanced

spiritual state, may well be projections on the plane of the imagination of celestial archetypes, and that in this casethey can be used creatively, to form the images of sacred art and iconography. But more often than not they willsimply derive from a middle or lower sphere, and will have nothing spiritual or creative about them. Hence theycorrespond to the world of fantasy and not to

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Glossary

the world of the imagination in the proper sense. It is on this account that the hesychastic masters on the wholetake a negative attitude towards them. They emphasize the grave dangers involved in this kind of experience,especially as the very production of these images may be the consequence of demonic or diabolic activity; andthey admonish those still in the early stages and not yet possessing spiritual discrimination (q.v.) not to be enticedand led captive by these illusory appearances, whose tumult may well overwhelm the mind. Their advice is to payno attention to them, but to continue with prayer and invocation, dispelling them with the name of Jesus Christ.

FLESH (aap^ - sarx): has various senses: (i) the human in contrast to the divine, as in the sentence, 'The Logosbecame flesh' (John 1:14); (ii) fallen and sinful human nature in contrast to human nature as originally createdand dwelling in communion with God; man when separated from God and in rebellion against Him; (iii) the bodyin contrast to the soul. The second meaning is probably the most frequent. If the word is being employed in thissense, it is important to distinguish 'flesh' from 'body' (achjua - soma). When St Paul lists the 'works of the flesh' inGal. 5: 19-21, he mentions such things as 'seditions', 'heresy' and 'envy', which have no special connection withthe body. In sense (ii) of the word, 'flesh' denotes the whole soul-body structure in so far as a man is fallen;likewise 'spirit' denotes the whole soul-body structure in so far as a man is redeemed. The soul as well as the bodycan become fleshly or 'carnal', just as the body as well as the soul can become spiritual. Asceticism involves awar against the flesh - in sense (ii) of the word - but not against the body as such.

GUARD OF THE HEART, OF THE INTELLECT {cpvXaKrj Kapdiaq, voh - phylaki kardias, nou): see Watchfulness.

HEART {xapdia - kardia): not simply the physical organ but the spiritual centre of man's being, man as made inthe image of God, his deepest and truest self, or the inner shrine, to be entered only through sacrifice and death,in which the mystery of the union between the divine and the human is consummated. ' "I called with my wholeheart", says the psalmist - that is, with body, soul and spirit' (John Klimakos, The Ladder of Divine Ascent, Step28, translated by Archimandrite Lazarus [London, 1959], pp. 257-8).

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Glossary

'Heart' has thus an all-embracing significance: 'prayer of the heart' means prayer not just of the emotions andaffections, but of the whole person, including the body.

ILLUSION {jiXavrj - plani): in our version sometimes also translated 'delusion'. Literally, wandering astray,deflection from the right path; hence error, beguilement, the acceptance of a mirage mistaken for trath. Cf. theliteral sense of sin (q.v.) as 'missing the mark'.

INCENSIVE POWER or aspect of the soul {Oujidq - thymos; to Ou^ikov - to thymikon): see Appetitive aspect of thesoul.

INNER ESSENCES OR PRINCIPLES (Uyoi - logoi): see Logos.

INTELLECT (yoijq - nous): the highest faculty in man, through which - provided it is purified - he knows God orthe inner essences or principles (q.v.) of created things by means of direct apprehension or spiritual perception.Unlike the dianoia or reason (q.v.), from which it must be carefully distinguished, the intellect does not functionby formulating abstract concepts and then arguing on this basis to a conclusion reached through deductivereasoning, but it understands divine truth by means of immediate experience, intuition or 'simple cognition' (theterm used by St Isaac the Syrian). The intellect dwells in the 'depths of the soul'; it constitutes the innermostaspect of the heart (St Diadochos, §§ 79, 88: in our translation, vol. i, pp. 280, 287). The intellect is the organ of

contemplation (q.v.), the 'eye of the heart' (Makarian Homilies).

INTELLECTION (vorjaig - noisis): not an abstract concept or a visual image, but the act or function of the intellect(q.v.) whereby it apprehends spiritual realities in a direct manner.

INTELLIGENT (Xojikoq - logikos): the Greek term logikos is so closely connected with Logos (q.v.), andtherefore with the divine Intellect, that to render it simply as 'logical' and hence descriptive of the reason (q.v.) isclearly inadequate. Rather it pertains to the intellect (q.v.) and qualifies the possessor of spiritual knowledge(q.v.). Hence when found in conjunction with 'soul' (logiki psychi), logikos is translated as 'deiform' or as'endowed with intelligence'. Intelligence itself (to Xojikov - to logikon; x6 loyiaiiKov - to logistikon; 'o Xoyia^og -ho logismos) is the ruling aspect of the intellect (q.v.) or its operative faculty.

INTENSE LONGING (spojg - eros): the word eros, when used in these

texts, retains much of the significance it has in Platonic thought. It denotes that intense aspiration and longingwhich impel man towards union with God, and at the same time something of the force which links the divineand the human. As unitive love par excellence, it is not distinct from agapi, but may be contrasted with agapi inthat it expresses a greater degree of intensity and ecstasy (q.v.).

INTIMATE COMMUNION {nappiaia - parrisia): literally, 'Rankness', 'freedom of speech'; hence freedom ofapproach to God, such as Adam possessed before the fall and the saints have regained by grace; a sense ofconfidence and loving trust in God's mercy.

JESUS PRAYER (Irjaoi) ehji] -Tisou evchi): the invocation of the name of Jesus, most commonly in the words,'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me', although there are a number of variant forms. Not merely a'technique' or a 'Christian mantra', but a prayer addressed to the Person of Jesus Christ, expressing our livingfaith (q.v.) in Him as Son of God and Saviour.

LOGOS {Adyoq - Logos): the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, or the

Intellect, Wisdom and Providence of Godin whom and through whom all things are created. As the unitary cosmic principle, the Logos contains inHimself the multiple logoi (inner principles or inner essences, thoughts of God) in accordance with which allthings come into existence at the times and places, and in the forms, appointed for them, each single thingthereby containing in itself the principle of its own development. It is these logoi, contained principally in theLogos and manifest in the forms of the created universe, that constitute the first or lower stage of Contemplation(q.v.).

MIND: see Reason.

NOETIC: {vorjTOQ - no'itos): that which belongs to or is characteristic of the intellect (q.v.). See also Intellection.

PASSION (ndOog - pathos): in Greek, the word signifies literally that which happens to a person or thing, anexperience undergone passively; hence an appetite or impulse such as anger, desire or jealousy, that violentlydominates the soul. Many Greek Fathers regard the passions as something intrinsically evil, a 'disease' of thesoul: thus St John Klimakos affirms that God is not the creator of the passions and that they are 'unnatural', aliento man's true

self (The Ladder of Divine Ascent, Step 26, translated by Archimandrite Lazarus [op. Cit.], p. 211). Other GreekFathers, however, look on the passions as impulses originally placed in man by God, and so fundamentally good,although at present distorted by sin (cf St Isaiah the Solitary, § 1: in our translation, vol. i, p. 22). On this secondview, then, the passions are to be educated, not eradicated; to be transfigured, not suppressed; to be usedpositively, not negatively {see Dispassion).PRACTICE OF THE VIRTUES {jipaKTiKrj - praktiki): see Contemplation.

PREPOSSESSION (Tzpolrjif/ig -prolipsis): see Temptation.

PROVOCATION {jipoaPoXi) - prosvofi): see Temptation.

REASON, mind {didvoia - dianoia): the discursive, conceptualizing and logical faculty in man, the function of

which is to draw conclusions or formulate concepts deriving from data provided either by revelation or spiritual

knowledge (q.v.) or by sense-observation. The knowledge of the reason is consequently of a lower order than

spiritual knowledge (q.v.) and does not imply any direct appre- hension or perception of the inner essences or

principles (q.v.) of created beings, still less of divine truth itself Indeed, such apprehension or perception, which

is the function of the intellect (q.v.), is beyond the scope of the reason.REBUTTAL {dvnXoyia - antilogia; avtipprjaic - antirrisis): the repulsing of a demon or demonic thought at the

moment of provocation (q.v.); or, in a more general sense, the bridling of evil thoughts.REMEMBRANCE OF GOD (jivrjiirj - mnimi Theou): not just calling God to mind, but the state of recoUectedness or

concentration in which attention is centred on God. As such it is the opposite of the state of self-indulgence and

insensitivity.REPENTANCE (jisxavoia - metanoia): the Greek signifies primarily a 'change of mind' or 'change of intellect': not

only sorrow, contrition or regret, but more positively and fundamentally the conversion or turning of our whole

life towards God.SENSUAL PLEASURE {r\dovi\ - hidoni): according to the context the Greek term signifies either sensual pleasure

(the most frequent meaning) or spiritual pleasure or delight.SIN (dfiapiia - hamartia): the primary meaning of the Greek word is 'failure' or, more specifically, 'failure to hit the

mark' and so a

'missing of the mark', a 'going astray' or, ultimately, 'failure to achieve the purpose for which one is created'. It isclosely related, therefore, to illusion (q.v.). The translation 'sin' should be read with these connotations in mind.

SORROW {XuTirj - lypi): often with the sense of 'godly sorrow' - the sorrow which nourishes the soulwith the hope engendered by repentance (q.v.).

SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE {yvmaig - gnosis): the knowledge of the intellect (q.v.) as distinct from that of thereason (q.v.). As such it is knowledge inspired by God, and so linked with contemplation (q.v.) and immediatespiritual perception.

STILLNESS {rjavxia - hesychia): from which are derived the words hesychasm and hesychast, used to denote thewhole spiritual tradition represented in The Philokalia as well as the person who pursues the spiritual path itdelineates (see Introduction, vol. i, pp. 14-16): a state of inner tranquillity or mental quietude and concentrationwhich arises in conjunction with, and is deepened by, the practice of pure prayer and the guarding of heart (q.v.)and intellect (q.v.). Not simply silence, but an attitude of listening to God and of openness towards Him.

TEMPERAMENT (Kpdaig - krasis): primarily the well-balanced blending of elements, humours or qualities inanimal bodies, but sometimes extended to denote the whole soul-body structure of man. In this sense it is theopposite to a state of psychic or physical disequilibrium.

TEMPTATION (Tzsipaajxoq - peirasmos): also translated in our version as 'trial' or 'test'. The word indicates,according to context: (i) a test or trial sent to man by God, so as to aid his progress on the spiritual way; (ii) asuggestion from the devil, enticing man into sin.

Using the word in sense (ii), the Greek Fathers employ a series of technical terms to describe the process oftemptation. (See in particular Mark the Ascetic, On the Spiritual Law, §§ 138-41, in vol. i of our translation, pp.119-20; John Klimakos, Ladder, Step 15 translated by Archimandrite Lazarus [op. cit.], pp. 157-8; Maximos, OnLove, i, §§ 83-84, in vol. ii of our translation, pp. 62-63; John of Damaskos, On the J'irtues and J'ices, also invol. ii of our translation, pp. 337-8.) The basic distinction made by these Fathers is between the demonicprovocation and man's

assent: the first lies outside man's control, while for the second he is morally responsible. In detail, the chiefterms employed are as follows:

(i) Provocation {npoaPoXrj - prosvoli): the initial incitement to evil. Mark the Ascetic defines this as an'image-free stimulation in the heart'; so long as the provocation is not accompanied by images, it does notinvolve man in any guilt. Such provocations, originating as they do from the devil, assail man from the outsideindependently of his free will, and so he is not morally responsible for them. His liability to these provocations isnot a consequence of the fall: even in paradise, Mark maintains, Adam was assailed by the devil's provocations.Man cannot prevent provocations from assailing him; what does lie in his power, however, is to maintainconstant watchfulness (q.v.) and so to reject each provocation as soon as it emerges into his consciousness - thatis to say, at its first appearance as a thought in his mind or intellect ([xovoXoyioxoc; - monologistos emphasis). Ifhe does reject the provocation, the sequence is cut off and the process of temptation is terminated.

(ii) Momentary disturbance (Tiapappimafiog - pararripismos) of the intellect, occurring 'without anymovement or working of bodily passion' (see Mark, Letter to Nicolas the Solitary: in our translation, vol. i, p.153). This seems to be more than the 'first appearance' of a provocation described in stage (i) above; for, at acertain point of spiritual growth in this life, it is possible to be totally released from such 'momentarydisturbance, whereas no one can expect to be altogether free from demonic provocations.

(Hi) Communion (oixiXia - homilia); coupling (avvdvaa/uog - syndyasmos). Without as yet entirely assentingto the demonic provocation, a man may begin to 'entertain' it, to converse or parley with it, turning it over in hismind pleasurably, yet still hesitating whether or not to act upon it. At this stage, which is indicated by the terms'communion' or 'coupling', the provocation is no longer 'image-free' but has become a logismos or thought (q.v.);and a person is morally responsible for having allowed this to happen.

(iv) Assent (auyKamOeaic - synkatathesis). This signifies a step beyond mere 'communion' or 'coupling'. Nolonger merely 'playing' with the evil suggestion, a

person now resolves to act upon it. There is now no doubt asto his moral culpability: even if

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circumstances prevent him from sinning outwardly, he is judged by God according to the intention in hisheart.

(v) Prepossession {npoXi-jif/iQ - prolipsis): defined by Mark- as 'the involuntary presence of former sins in thememory'. This state of 'prepossession' or prejudice results from repeated acts of sin which predispose a man toyield to particular temptations. In principle he retains his free choice and can reject demonic provocations; butin practice the force of habit makes it more and more difficult for him to resist.

(vi) Passion (q.v.). If a man does not fight strenuously against a prepossession, it will develop into an evilpassion.

THEOLOGY (QeoXoyia - theologia): denotes in these texts far more than the learning about God and religiousdoctrine acquired through academic study. It signifies active and conscious participation in or perception of therealities of the divine world - in other words, the realization of spiritual knowledge (q.v.). To be a theologian inthe full sense, therefore, presupposes the attainment of the state of stillness (q.v.) and dispassion (q.v.), itself theconcomitant of pure and undistracted prayer, and so requires gifts bestowed on but extremely few persons.

THOUGHT {XoyiajxoQ - logismos; vorjfia - noima): (i) frequently signifies not thought in the ordinary sense, butthought provoked by the demons, and therefore often qualified in translation by the adjective 'evil' or 'demonic';it can also signs divinely-inspired thought; (ii) a 'conceptual image', intermediate between fantasy (q.v.) and anabstract concept; this sense of noima is frequent in the texts of St Maximos, where the rendering 'conceptualimage' is normally adopted.

WATCHFULNESS {vrjif/iQ - nipsis): literally, the opposite to a state of drunken stupor; hence spiritual sobriety,alertness, vigilance. It signifies an attitude of attentiveness {npoaoxrj - prosochi), whereby one keeps watch overone's inward thoughts and fantasies (q.v.), maintaining guard over the heart and intellect

((pvXaKrj Kapdiag/vov -phylaki kardias/noii; rriprjaig Kapdiag/voi) - tirisis kardias/nou). In Hesychios, On Watchfulness and Holiness, §§1-6 (in our translation. Vol. i, pp. 162-3), watchfulness is given a very broad definition, being used to indicatethe whole range of the practice of the virtues. It is closely linked with purity of heart and stillness (q.v.). TheGreek title of The Philokalia is 'The

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Philokalia of the Niptic Fathers', i.e. of the fathers who practised and inculcated the virtue of watchfulness. Thisshows how central is the role assigned by St Nikodimos to this state.WRATH, wrathfulness: see Appetitive aspect of the soul.